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The Great Proconsul

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The Memoirs of Mrs HESTER WARD

Formerly in the Family of the
Honble. WARREN HASTINGS, Esq.,
late Governor-General of India

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EDITED BY

SYDNEY C. GRIER

Author of
'Like Another Helen,' 'The Advanced-Guard,'
&c., &c.

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MCMIV

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A NOTE OF WARNING

TO THE ORDINARY NOVEL-READER.

You are earnestly recommended to shut this book and pass on, as it will not interest you. There are here no strenuous young heroes effecting the impossible by sheer force of personality, but merely a tired middle-aged man fighting with his back to the wall, meeting with rebuke rather than support from his superiors at home, disloyalty from his colleagues, and from his subordinates that malignant stupidity against which we are told that the gods themselves fight in vain. You would find this record of a portion of his life long, for the struggle was a long one; dull, for the history of a succession of thwarted efforts will hardly make exhilarating reading; stiff, on account of the extraordinary complexity of those efforts. The biographers, with a laudable desire for clearness, have followed one another in treating the Mahratta War, the Carnatic War, the trouble with the Supreme Court and the dissensions in the Council, in a series of watertight compartments, as though each cause for anxiety might be more or less satisfactorily disposed of and banished from the ruler's mind before another called for his attention. But the facts were less complaisant,

confronting him with two foreign campaigns at the same time that he was engaged in quelling a mutiny and averting a civil war.

There is no conventional "lived happy ever after" to end the story, for the struggle for political existence was only the prelude to the struggle for personal liberty and honour, summarised in the victim's own words to his countrymen, "I gave you all, and you have rewarded me with confiscation, disgrace, and a life of impeachment." How little such a reward was deserved in the case of the man who at a period of unprecedented ignominy, when the British arms were discredited and British frontiers receding in every other part of the globe, not only kept his country's flag flying, but advanced her outposts and made victory possible to her troops, the following pages attempt to show. The view of his character they contain is drawn from his own writings and from those of his friends and his enemies, the chief of whom has left us in his diary the most damning evidence possible against himself, in revealing his own reckless malevolence and utter incapacity for perceiving any good in any human creature. In such a mind as that of Philip Francis there could be no sympathy for the man who never lost a friend, and of whom we are told that "all who knew him loved him, and they who knew him most loved him best."

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THE GREAT PROCONSUL

CHAPTER I.

A BEREAVEMENT.

FRASER HOUSE, CALCUTTA, *June ye 30th*, 1777.

MY kind Mrs Fraser has laid a task upon me such as I accept only in the hope of pleasing her. When we quitted the breakfast apartment this morning she carried me as usual to her dressing-room, and, offering her apologies on being compelled to leave me for one of those charitable errands in which she discovers so great a delight, directed my attention to her scrutoire, where I saw a monstrous great pile of fine gilt-edged paper and several new pens.

"I have often recommended my dear Mrs Ward to occupy her leisure with keeping a journal or diary," says she, "and she has always evaded my request with her desire to profit by my discourse or to dive into my library. Now I am summoned to poor Mrs Carr's sick child, and I have locked up the 'History of Emily Montague,' so there's no help for her."

"But sure I hate writing, ma'am!" I cried. "I have wrote so much for my grandpapa."

"And you'll be thankful yet for the discipline in which the good old gentleman had you. See, you are arrived in Bengall at a most momentous time in the history of the settlement, and you are resolved to embark upon a life such as no European

female has hitherto attempted. When to this is added the good practice you have had in writing, you'll surely confess 'tis your duty thus to minister to the instruction and entertainment of your friends."

"But I have no friends, ma'am—none but yourself, that is."

"Then, pray, let my dear Mrs Ward commit her experiences to writing for her own sake, if she won't for mine. When I carried my Charlotte and my little Robert home to put them to school, I sought out the friend of my own youth, to whom I had once despatched such reams of letters as you'd laugh to see them. Sure the dear creature brought out all my old scribbles to show me, and we read them together, and lived over again what I dare to say was as terrible a series of trials as ever woman experienced, so that we wept or laughed or shuddered as if over a romance."

"But preserve me from such an experience as yours, ma'am!" I cried—"even if it were possible in these quieter days. Pray, how could I, or any one, discover any interest in a narrative that must needs begin, 'Born of parents in a respectable, though not an elevated situation, I was early left an orphan to the care of my paternal grandfather'? Ah, madam, the early portion of my life is too devoid of events to bear recounting, and the later part—that revolution which has changed the happiest young female in Britain to the most desolate widow in India—is too poignant to recall. Why should I trouble myself to write what will only trouble my kind hostess to read?"

"Why, no," said she. "My troubles will only begin when I don't hear from you. And let me assure my dear Mrs Ward that she'll find herself so entirely without occupation in her novel existence that she'll find writing no trouble, but a delight."

"Surely," I said with something of severity, "the care of an aged and afflicted relative will leave me little need to seek for occupation?"

"You don't know the life to which you are going," cried Mrs Fraser, with more vivacity than is usual with her; "you don't know these native women and their habits. Oh, my dear Mrs Ward, you won't listen to me, but I tremble for you. I distrust this sudden outburst of affection on the part of your

uncle's widow and family; I dislike their proposition of a solitary journey for you to this isolated dwelling, remote from all Europeans. I feel that there's something suspicious in their handsome offer to share with you the crust saved from the wreck of the poor Colonel's fortune. You think me prejudiced, unfair —I know it. But I can't let you go without this one chance of obtaining help if you need it. Your uncle's widow, I am safe in saying it, can't write. Your cousin, if she is like other country-born ladies, has forgot how to hold a pen, if she ever learned it. In such a household, for you to be seen writing a letter if any cause for anxiety had occurred, would direct universal attention upon you. But if you are known to be in the habit of writing for a certain period every day, who can tell if you devote a few minutes to a letter instead of to your diary? At least this removes one barrier between you and your friends."

"There shall be no barrier that I can destroy between one kind friend and myself," I said, kissing her hand, for her eyes were suffused with tears, and I was ashamed to have caused her so much anxiety. "Will it relieve my dear Mrs Fraser's mind if I humour her by keeping this diary?"

"Why, that it will," said she.

"Then I'll begin it now," said I, but when she was gone, I could not determine how to make a beginning. Yet my promise must be kept; and to tease Mrs Fraser, I have wrote down nothing but our conversation together. Fie upon you, Hester Ward! Can you find pleasure in teasing your best friend after all her kindness towards you?

. . . . . .

BUXERAUTGUNGE, *July ye 17th.*

Scarce a week established in my new abode, and my dear Mrs Fraser's prophecy is fulfilled. I am drove to this foolish diary for want of any other occupation. Not that I have fallen upon any justification of my kind friend's dark suspicions, which seem to me entirely unnecessary, but I have nothing to do from morning to night. From the *varendar* of this fine *pucca*-built house I look forth upon a waste of flooded country, with a few of the poorer sort of natives puddling about in the mud, as my

cousin Alexander phrases it. In the apartment adjoining mine sits my cousin Clorinda, the snake of her *houcca* gracefully disposed about her arm, the mouthpiece perpetually between her lips. The reading of French romances and magazines of fashion, and the passing in review of her gowns and jewels, serves to employ her days. Twenty times at least has she gone through my poor possessions, asking freely for the loan of such as struck her fancy, and hinting broadly that the loan might as well be a gift, "for you're a widow, Hester, and won't never want 'em again."

Is this recollection censorious? Is it my duty to erase it? No, I think it better to write down my sentiments here than give them utterance when next Clorinda, with her attendant horde of busy idle native wenches, invades my chamber. As I discovered when I indited a letter to Mrs Fraser the day after my arrival, she regards the art of writing with a sentiment between suspicion and fear, and won't interfere with my paper and pens. At the worst she will make ill-natured remarks upon my studiousness at tiffen, in the presence of her husband, Mr Ernesto D'Cruiz, and my cousin Alexander, whom we meet only at meals; but these gentlemen may think me as *blue* as they please, for all I care.

What is it forces this bitterness from my pen? I can't say I have been deceived—or rather, that my cousins intended to deceive me—and yet it's very certain that I should not have come hither had I known the actual state of the family. Poverty, and with it a lack of frugality, marks the domestic œconomy. The sumptuous European appointments of this portion of the house are dirty and defaced, the plate battered, the table equipage broken and soiled. This I had learnt to expect, as also the perpetual and morose absorption of my cousin Alexander, whom I understood to be endeavouring to rescue some fragments out of the wreck of his father's fortune. But why was Clorinda's marriage urged as a reason for inviting me to bestow on my aunt the affectionate care of a daughter, when Clorinda and her husband are established in this house? And why was I assured that my aunt was a sufferer needing constant attendance, when she sits cross-legged among her

cushions all day in perfect health, eating *paun* out of a gold box or smoking her highly ornamented houcca, and won't permit me to wait upon her for more than a few moments every third day? But I am becoming as frantically suspicious as my dear good Mrs Fraser, and I will dismiss these ungenerous thoughts. Questionless there has been some mistake, due to the imperfect English of the venerable Gentoo, my aunt's *banyan*, whom she despatched down the river to invite me from Calcutta.

It's sufficiently droll to look back now upon those gorgeous dreams of my early days which hung about my uncle's marriage with an Indian female,—the daughter, as we were assured, of a Moorish prince of that country. There was no question of the Colonel's bringing his lady to England, for it was always understood that our climate would be prejudicial to her constitution; but he included more than once in his letters civil messages from her. He himself was most generous in his remembrance. Every season there was sure to reach us, by the hands of the captain or purser of one of the Company's fleet, a pipe of Madeira for my grandpapa or a piece of flowered shawl to make him a warm morning-gown, and for me pieces of muslin and silk shawl-handkerchiefs, or fine longcloth for shifts. Thrice, also, there were presents from my aunt,—once an extraordinary fine piece of kingcob for a waistcoat for my grandpapa; once a string of pearls, very white and even, for me; and again a bag of leaves for curries, which would have been better appreciated had we known how to make use of them.

From my dear Mr Ward it was that I first learned that my uncle's lady remained a Mussulmaunnee (which in Moors[1] signifies a female of the Mahometan sect); but who would have dreamed that one so long married to a British officer could have preserved inviolate not only her religion but her original habits and customs? Behind this fine Europe house of my uncle's is another, connected with it by a passage, where my aunt, the Begum Haines, as she is called in the settlement, has always maintained the usages to which she was accustomed in her father's house. Swathed in the finest of gauzes or the costliest of shawls, according to the temperature, surrounded by crowds

[1] Hindustani.

of obsequious women-servants, she remains as much secluded as other females of rank among the Indians, seeing the face of no man not belonging to the circle of her immediate relatives.

Seeing this now for myself, I can understand why my uncle made no motion to offer me an asylum in his family when he despatched his trusted friend Mr Ward to consult with my venerated grandpapa, then much advanced in age, concerning my future. In the inscrutable designs of Providence it was ordained that that revered parent should never enjoy the happiness of entrusting to so respectable[1] a protector the young creature whom he had nurtured. My kind grandpapa departed this life just as Mr Ward arrived in England; and on that gentleman's visiting his agents, who were also my uncle's, the first thing shown him was a letter from a country attorney, desiring any instructions that Colonel Haines might have sent home regarding his niece. To this best of men, who knew, moreover, that my grandpapa had subsisted upon an annuity of small amount, the opportunity of performing an act of kindness was in itself a summons to do so, and he journeyed into the County of Salop with no more delay than was necessary to secure his seat on the coach. In the domicile recently deprived by death of its head he found a great girl of sixteen, possessed neither of beauty, distinguished talents, nor elegant accomplishments, and betraying her country breeding by her awkward silence in his presence, but so well schooled (if I may say it) by her departed relative as to require only the expression of a wish to set her all agog to fulfil it.

To this young female (I can look back upon her now from the distance of near two years' further experience of life) the gentleman from Bengall appeared invested with an extraordinary lustre. He was the chosen friend and business partner of her respectable uncle, and by him endowed with power over her fate. But if there was in her first complacency[2] towards him something of the slavish awe with which the Hottentot may regard the first European that penetrates his territory, this was quickly changed into an affectionate veneration springing from an eager observa-

[1] *Respectable* at this time enjoyed its original meaning, *worthy of respect.*
[2] Complaisance.

tion of Mr Ward's own character. He was the first person that had ever thought fit to enquire her opinion upon matters regarding herself; and though she was neither capable nor desirous of exercising this faculty of choice, yet her gratitude was none the less sincere. With an infinite kindness and consideration, Mr Ward elicited from her that there was no one with whom she would desire a treaty of marriage set on foot, though her uncle was ready with a genteel dowry; that she had no turn, as we say, for any elegant trade to which she might have been apprenticed; and that she saw nothing before her but a place in some gentleman's family, where she might assist her mistress in the arts of the household in return for a moderate wage.

Then Mr Ward brought forward the suggestion which, as she believes, had been the first upon her uncle's instructions, and, with all the tenderness and delicacy in the world, proposed himself as her husband. From the young creature who had learnt to revere and esteem him ever more and more day by day he could receive but one response; and since all those to whom she owed attention condemned delay, she entered very shortly upon that brief period of happiness, the recollection of which must serve to cast into obscurer shadow the remaining years of her desolated life. For eighteen months she enjoyed the inestimable privilege of Mr Ward's society and conversation, accompanying him first on several journeys throughout Britain and France, where he had been commissioned by Mr Governor Hastings, his friend and patron, to visit all the best-ordered cities and towns, and enquire into the nature of the regulations under which they were governed, for the future benefit of the settlement of Calcutta, the seat of Mr Hastings' rule. When Mr Ward's enquiries were complete, the woman who had the felicity to call herself his wife found that the one fear which had beset her was without foundation, since she was to be permitted to accompany him on his return to Bengall. Why had she not put the question to him? it may be asked. But this would be difficult to answer It may be she feared to hear she was doomed to remain in England, or perhaps that she piqued herself on having attained such a pitch of affectiouate deference to her spouse as never to ask him any questions.

It was in the Company's ship *Ganges*, Captain Richardson, that Mr and Mrs Ward (I can easier write of her in this style, as of some happy creature whose existence terminated with her happiness three months back) set sail for Bengall. Prosperous gales attended them; the very ocean curbed his rages for their convenience; among the miscellaneous crowd of their associates on shipboard there was none that made himself obnoxious. No intimation was vouchsafed of the blow so soon to fall, unless it might be that as the ship approached Madrass Mr Ward began to discover an anxiety, unusual with him, to inform his wife on some of those points upon ignorance of which she prided herself. He spoke to her of business matters, telling her that from persons of his acquaintance met at Cape Town and Bombay he had received a hint that the prudence of Colonel Haines, her uncle, was not what it had been, and that it might even now be too late to avert a considerable loss of fortune as the result of the wild enterprises in which he had lately engaged. He was even good enough to endeavour to explain to her the nature of the transactions in which his fortune was embarked; but all she can at present recollect is that these had of late suffered a change for the worse, owing to the action of the Company's servants in high places, and of Mr Governor Hastings in particular. For while Colonel Haines, as a retired officer of the Company's army, and Mr Ward, as one of their surgeons, had formerly been able to carry on a considerable trade on their own account, by virtue of permissions called *dusstucks*, particularly in the articles of opium and salt, these two commodities had been made into monopolies of the Company, so that the only branch left open for private trade was the taking up the Company's contracts instead of acting for themselves in this line. Mr Ward spoke very justly on the subject, saying that Mr Hastings was quite right to use this means of increasing the Company's revenue, which had been much diminished of late years by the private trade of its servants; but I gathered from him that Colonel Haines did not hold this moderate view. And, indeed, since I have been here the violence of the language used by my cousins against Mr Hastings and all the measures of his government has been such as to cause me alarm.

The blow that was impending fell at Madrass, where Mr Ward received some alarming intelligence by the first boat that came off to the ship. Turning to his wife, who had been regarding with apprehension those strange machines, the *mussoulas* or surf-boats, by which alone the shore may be approached, he asked if it would much incommode her if she did not accompany him to land that day, and she complied with his unspoken desire with a complacency for which she has never ceased to blame herself. Mr Ward went on shore, with several other gentlemen; and his wife, without enquiring it, heard from the lips of those who remained the intelligence that concerned herself. Her uncle, Colonel Haines, after a period of such wild speculation as astonished the whole coast, had died bankrupt, having dissipated his partner's fortune as well as his own, and leaving his family in the most extreme poverty. To Mrs Ward it was a source of pleasure that she had heard these tidings so early that the shock they caused would be mitigated before the return of her spouse. Remembering that Mr Ward would now be compelled to begin again on the lowest step of the ladder, as they say, she pleased herself with the thought that she might serve him in the place of a clerk and assistant. When she had once suggested this, he had told her smiling that Bengall was styled the Ladies' Paradise, so assiduous were the gentlemen to see that the ladies did and saw nothing in any way disagreeable to them; but she trusted now to assure him that no labour connected with him could be disagreeable to her.

With these musings she pleased herself until the gentlemen began to come off from the shore, who told her that they had seen Mr Ward hastening from one friend's house to another in the endeavour to retrieve a portion of the disaster brought about by his partner's imprudence. Alarmed that he should by this activity have exposed himself to the heat of the sun, she watched for him from the deck, and had at length the happiness to distinguish him in a *mussoula* that came off just at sunset. The blacks who man these boats are among the most skilful boatmen in the world, and their caution is further stimulated by the law forfeiting the life of every individual of the boat's crew if a European under their charge is drowned;

but the extreme violence of the surf is at times excessive even for them. Before the eyes of his agonized wife, the *mussoula* in which Mr Ward had taken his seat was overturned by the force of the waves, and every creature in her flung into the raging element. The Indians who attended the *mussoula* in smaller boats or rafts called *catamerans*, in view of such an accident, succeeded in rescuing all the passengers, although Mr Ward was longest of all in the water before he was perceived. Yet he was able, when he was carried on board the Indiaman, to chide his wife affectionately for the violence of her grief, so that she reminded herself how much more disastrous the misfortunes of that day might have been. But before the next day dawned Mr Ward was seized with a violent fever, whether due to the incautious exposure of himself to the sun, the perturbation of spirits under which he had laboured, or the long immersion, Mrs Ward an't physician enough to know. Already of mature years, and enfeebled in constitution by a long residence in the East, he was unable to throw off the disease; and when it had run its course, there remained only a brief interval in which he might summon all his strength to give his last charges to his wife. It was his advice that she should, while cultivating a friendly acquaintance with her uncle's family, abstain from too great intimacy with them, and place herself rather in the hands of Captain Fraser, of his Majesty's navy, and his lady, Mr Ward's most trusted friends in Calcutta. He added something to the effect that it might be possible to recover some small sum of money when Colonel Haines' affairs were settled, and blamed himself for the easy temper that had led him to leave so much in the Colonel's hands, and thus to bequeathe only destitution to his wife. On her crying out some incoherent words that testified to the infinite affection and esteem with which she regarded him, he gently checked her transports, and asking her pardon for giving her pain, passed on to make two recommendations which she can hardly bear even now to recall. He knew that her sentiments would lead her to clothe herself in the deepest garb of woe, as worn in Britain, he told her; and he made it his earnest entreaty that in order to avoid injury to her health in this climate, she would wear not black

but white. But more than this, he besought her, preventing the vows he beheld trembling on her lips, that if an opportunity was offered her of entering into a second matrimonial connection agreeable to herself, she would embrace it, secure in his approval. There! I have wrote it; and horrid enough it looks, though not so horrid as to hear it said. 'Tis the one thing I can't pardon my dear Mr Ward. But at least he laid no command upon me in this respect.

CHAPTER II.

A TARTAR.

BUXERAUTGUNGE, *August ye* 1*st*, 1777.

When I laid down my pen last week, after tracing the record of the closing scenes of the existence of my beloved husband, the grief aroused by the recollection was so excessive that I vowed never again to enter upon an occupation so little soothing to the sensibilities which it awakened. Once more, however, my surroundings in this place drive me to such relief as is to be obtained from my pen, and this the more that I have something with which to reproach myself in regard to my cousins here.

Last night, when the rain, which rarely intermits but for a brief half hour, ceased some time before sunset, and seemed to give promise of a fine evening, I shook off the lethargy with which this climate afflicts me, and calling to Silina, the black maidservant provided me by my dear Mrs Fraser, desired her to attend me out walking. To this she raised many objections, saying that ladies never walked in Bengall; but finding me resolute, assisted me to tuck up my gown well over my petticoat, and brought me my gloves and a scarf. Standing at the head of the varendar-steps, I was ready to regret my persistence, so uninviting was the appearance of the sodden ground which surrounds

the house, itself encircled by the waters. But this hesitation did not make me more complacent when my cousin Alexander, approaching round the corner of the varendar, exclaimed loudly that I could not and must not go out.

"Pardon me, cousin; I can and will," said I.

"Why, where will you go?" said he.

"You have a garden; I'll walk there," said I.

"There's nothing there but mud at this season," says he eagerly. "Do but give yourself the trouble to observe my boots."

"But I have my pattens," I reminded him.

"The place swarms with snakes," he said, more eagerly still, speaking in the clipped and hissing style in which Indians and country-born persons pronounce our tongue.

"Why, I don't purpose venturing into the bushes," said I. "There's a cement path down to the river, and I'll keep to that."

"But there's nothing there but the *gaut* at which you landed."

"But 'tis a walk, at any rate," said I, impatiently, I fear. "Besides, I saw buildings by the river-side, and I would learn what they're for."

"Nothing but native huts, I'll assure you," says he.

"Are you serious?" said I. "To me they had much more the air of being Europe-built."

"Oh, the godowns!" he cried, as one upon whom a sudden light has broken. "'Tis there that my brother D'Cruiz and I are labouring by means of continuous toil to re establish our credit as a family, cousin, but there's little a lady would care to see."

"Nay," said I, "I'm in the humour to see anything outside these walls. Pray tell me about this business of yours."

"I won't!" he cried, his sallow visage growing dark, and rendered more frightful by the excess of powder which disfigures his hair. "This is an impertinent curiosity, ma'am, unbecoming one in your situation, and I won't pretend any willingness to gratify it. You'll be pleased to confine your inquisitive humour to the house—to this part of it, indeed, and not to pry into the

shifts to which my brother-in-law and I are put to maintain those dependent on us."

I was so much taken aback by this violence that I could not determine whether I was more angry with myself for awakening it, or with my cousin for yielding to it; but I made him a curtsey, and retired at once to my apartment. Here I was endeavouring to bring myself to offer an apology to my cousin for the freedom he had taken so ill, when Clorinda sauntered in (the walls of the rooms here are full of windows, and each window is a door), and set to rallying me upon my discomfited aspect. I fear I returned her but a short answer.

"Why, you're really cross!" said she. "What has put you about?"

I asked her pardon, and told her I was afraid I had offended her brother by desiring to go abroad, though I could not conceive why it should throw him into such transports.

"Oh, that's Alexander's way," says she. "Here are he and Mr D'Cruiz positively ferocious with me, and all because I said that if the rain held off to-morrow I should like a little jaunt to Chandernagore. They say we must keep out of the sight of my poor papa's creditors."

"Creditors!" I said. "Are there many of them, then? I should have thought——"

I caught myself up, fearing that what I had been about to utter might be considered too free, but Clorinda, with an appearance of the liveliest curiosity, pressed me to proceed. Unwillingly I confessed that in view of the handsome appointments of the house (for the plate alone, though battered, must be extraordinary valuable), the rich dress of my aunt and her women, and the jewels with which they are loaded—nay, even the silks and brocades and gauzes with which her cushions are covered and her apartments hung—it would be well to part with some of these luxuries and pay my uncle's debts. I had not so much as mentioned the fine gowns and jewels in which Clorinda herself discovers such delight, but before I had finished my sentence she turned from me with the most extreme coldness and quitted the room. After supper, at which meal I felt myself a convicted criminal, since no one spoke to me, and Mr

D'Cruiz openly scowled as often as his eyes met mine, my cousin Alexander desired with much solemnity to speak with me in private. When he had so far subdued his emotions as to find utterance—

"I learn, ma'am," says he, "from my sister that you're dissatisfied with the accommodations provided for you here. 'Tis our misfortune"—he waved aside the cry of horror with which I endeavoured to apprise him of his mistake—"that we are unable at present to discharge even a portion of the sum in which we are indebted to you." Heavens! was I one of the creditors, then? "I had looked, I own, for more generosity from a relative of my excellent father's, but permit me to assure you that as soon as I find it possible to obtain an advance on the merchandise I have in store, a first instalment shall be paid you, sufficient to enable you to make your abode where you chuse."

He stopped, for I had risen and approached him.

"And can my cousin, the son of my revered uncle," I said, scarce able to speak, "think that I would consent thus to burden his kindness? Count me, pray, as the last of the creditors to be repaid rather than the first, and be assured that in any event I'll receive no more than may assure me a modest independence."

The severity of my cousin's countenance relaxed, but only to a slight degree. "I see I misjudged you," he said; "but your reference to my mother's jewels and furniture roused me to anger. In this country, ma'am, these things are never seized for debt, and only the extremity of famine would justify their being sold."

"Pardon me this ignorance, then," said I; "and if you'll admit me to some share in your confidence, tell me whether I can do anything to assist you. I have no money, alas! but——"

"Cousin," he said more civilly, "your presence under this roof is the greatest assistance you can afford us. I could not endure that my father's niece should be eating the bread of strangers, even while I could not furnish her with the means to live as her quality demanded; but if she can be content to remain here, and submit to the restrictions which our poor way of living imposes, she may be assured of our eternal gratitude,

and our utmost endeavours to return her her due at the earliest possible."

How could I but respond to this affecting appeal, even though it put an end to the hopes I had begun to cherish of returning to my kind Mrs Fraser after a decent visit here? It's evident I can't abandon my uncle's interesting family in their distress without branding myself with the extreme of inhumanity, and therefore I must remain at Buxerautgunge until they intimate my release. Certainly I will think no more of casting aside my journal, although my paper's covered with spots of damp, and there's a sort of forest growing up round my inkpot. But then my clothes are mildewed and my shoes mouldy, and the leather is peeling away from the boards of the few books I have brought with me. 'Tis no worse to write on damp paper than to try to sew with rusty needles, and I resort to my diary the more readily that by returning to my first arrival in India, public rather than private matters may occupy my pen.

Of the weeks succeeding Mr Ward's death I say nothing. They were occupied by the slow progress of our vessel from Madrass Roads to Kedgery, and thence, under charge of a river pilot, to Diamond Harbour. To me, at least, the voyage appeared slow; but the cause of this may have been that every object in my cabin served to torment me, reminding me afresh of the dear gentleman to whose forethought its presence there was due. The polite assiduities of all the gentlemen on board were directed in vain to the restoration of my spirits; and when we cast anchor, Captain Richardson, with the bluffness which in him veils a truly benevolent character, offered me to accompany him to Calcutta in his pinnace, saying he was anxious to deliver me over to Mrs Fraser, for fear I should expire of melancholy on his hands. Understanding that by this means I could reach the settlement in two tides, I accepted gratefully of the kindness, and was complimented with the offer of the Captain's own apartment. He was in haste to be gone, for the gentlemen who came down the river in *budgerows* to greet their friends on board the *Ganges* brought news of some mysterious convulsion that was agitating the government of the Presidency. It appeared that matters had reached a crisis between the

Governor-General and the Councillors who had so long thwarted and controlled him, and I listened with as much eagerness as the Captain when I heard the name of my dear Mr Ward's noble friend and patron uttered in the conversation.

"I can't tell you what it is," says one gentleman, "but for days Hastings has worn the aspect of a cat waiting to pounce."

"Then Heaven help the mice!" says Captain Richardson. "Is Mr Hastings at last about to oust his opponents in the Council and deport 'em to Europe? I'll carry them home with the greatest of pleasure, and see 'em safe on shore."

"No, indeed, sir. Why, to tell truth, the general rumour is that 'tis the other way about,—that the General and his Majesty King Francis the First have a plot to get rid of Mr Hastings."

"But I thought you said 'twas Hastings was on the look-out to pounce?" cried the Captain in prodigious disappointment.

"And so 'tis, Captain. It's the moment of the breaking of the plot we all look for. Did you never hear of *catching a Tartar?*"

"Why, so I have, indeed!" cried the Captain, with a great laugh. "And if that's going forward, may I be there to see it!"

This was said while the furnishing and provisioning of the pinnace was in hand; and when all was ready, Captain Richardson assisted me down the accommodation-ladder amidst tokens of the greatest respect from the gentlemen on board, desiring me to consider his apartment as my own, while he contented himself with the smaller cabin forward. When the sun's heat permitted of my coming on deck, he pointed out to me very civilly the different objects on the river banks; but showed always the greatest anxiety to have the voyage over and reach the settlement, since no one, in all the boats that we met, could give him any certain information, saying only that the most extreme inquietude prevailed in Calcutta. But when we were got as far as the part of the river called Garden Reach, and the Captain had desired me to observe Mr Barwell's fine villa, the first to be built in that situation, he became on a sudden very highly

pleased, seeing a gentleman standing on the landing-stage with two or three black servants at his heels.

"Now we shall have the news!" he cried, having ordered the rowers to turn to the shore, "for that's young Mr Grand, who I hear is admitted to the most flattering intimacy by the Governor-General. Your servant, sir! Can I be of any service to you?"

"Your most humble servant, Captain," said the young gentleman, advancing and bowing with an air of vivacity that bespoke his Gallic descent. "May I beg the favour of a passage back to the Esplanade? I came hither in Mr Barwell's budgerow, on an errand of his, and his fellows have mistook their orders and abandoned me here."

"Pay your fare by telling me the news, and I'll take you up to Champaul Gaut!" cried the Captain, and the young gentleman stepping on board, he presented him to me by the name of Mr George Grand, of the Service. Mr Grand had enjoyed the acquaintance of my dear Mr Ward before he left Bengall, and his feeling remarks brought the tears to my eyes, which the Captain perceiving, checked by again demanding what his passenger could tell him of the news.

"Why, you couldn't have asked a better person!" cried the young gentleman. "You'll have discovered already that we are in the throes of a revolution which mayn't end without bloodshed? Well, when you was last in the river, Captain, you left poor Mr Hastings trampled under foot by the Triumvirate, as we styled 'em,—Messieurs Clavering, Monson, and Francis, the last the worst. They left no stone unturned to break his heart and blast his reputation, accusing him of every crime from petty larceny to wilful murder. You know his undaunted spirit, but many months of such persecution as this went far to break it, and in a moment of despondency he wrote to his agent at home that if he could not have justice done him, and his authority in his own Council vindicated, he would withdraw. But since then a happy transformation has occurred. Colonel Monson dies, and the Governor-General's casting-vote, added to that of his faithful friend Mr Barwell, makes him independent of the roaring and bellowing of the two opponents that remain.

But on Saturday last the *Cormorant* frigate came into the river, and up comes Mr Mackintosh with private advices for the Governor-General. That silly fellow Macleane, his agent, had taken upon himself to interpret a momentary expression of petulance as a reasoned command, and announced Mr Hastings' resignation to the Court of Directors. They jumped at it, and made haste to appoint General Clavering to succeed him."

"Then all's lost already?" cried the Captain, with a great oath.

"Why, that's still to be seen, sir. For near a week Mr Hastings has borne the burden of this knowledge, aware that his enemies must soon share it; and the day before yesterday the *Rippon* came up to Diamond Harbour, bringing the Company's packet. This was opened and read in Council yesterday, to the excessive joy of the General and Mr Francis. Mr Hastings made no motion. With the nobility that distinguishes him, he was prepared to recognise the act of his agent, and effect the resignation he had never intended, if his two opponents had shown but one spark of that honour and delicacy which are strangers to their bosoms. How was he rewarded? This morning General Clavering sends him a letter acquainting him of his own succession to the chair, addressed 'Warren Hastings, Esq.,' as to a private person, and demanding the keys of Fort William and the treasuries. This crowning insult Mr Hastings could not brook. Calling in at his house this morning on my way into town, I met Palmer, his private secretary, on the stairs, in a great agitation of spirits. He whispered to me that he was going to secure the garrison of Fort William, and passed on. I found Mr Hastings writing busily, with Captain Roberts, the General's Persian interpreter, who had brought the missive, awaiting his answer. Pretty soon Will Palmer comes back. Colonel Morgan sent every assurance of fidelity. Fort William was prepared for action, the gates were locked, and the keys would be delivered up to nobody but Mr Hastings. Mr Hastings, as Governor General, thereupon ordered Mr Sumner to convene the Revenue Board, which was attended only by Mr Barwell, who had previously received a summons to Council from Governor-General Clavering. Will you credit me, sir,

when I tell you that the General took the oaths of office in presence of Mr Francis alone, and that the two good gentlemen then passed a host of minutes and resolutions under the style of the Governor-General and Council? Yet even at that moment Mr Hastings and Mr Barwell were sending the necessary orders not only to Colonel Morgan at Fort William, but to the commanders at Budge-budge and Barrackpore. There could be little doubt which of the Governors enjoyed the reality, and which the pretence of power. When I left the Company's House, Mr Hastings and Mr Barwell had desired the attendance of the King's Judges, intending to suggest the submitting of the affair to their arbitration."

"Now what in the world was that for?" cried the Captain. "When a man has both the right and the power, why not use it? If my first and second mates were scheming to take the *Ganges* from me, would you find me submitting the mutiny to the judgment of a *squad* of parsons?"

"Why, no, Captain; but in that lies Mr Hastings' superiority to all other men. He's so convinced of the justice of his cause as to be willing to submit it to the decision of a body two of whose members are avowedly on the side of his opponents, and so excessive humane that he will risk the destruction of his hopes rather than cause bloodshed."

"Then he an't even sure of the Judges?"

"No, indeed, sir, and that's the cause of all our anxiety. I can't bring myself to return to my own house until I have heard the event of their consultation, and I believe it won't become known till late at night."

"Make the best of your liberty, sir!" cried the Captain. "In another month, by all I hear, you'll have to answer to your lady for your whereabouts."

"What, is Mr Grand about to be married?" I asked.

"That I am, madam, and to the loveliest and most amiable of women," replied the young gentleman eagerly.

"Women! Of children!" cried the Captain. "Will you believe me, ma'am, the future Mrs Grand an't but fourteen years of age? Ought to be in the nursery a good two years still, with a governess to look after her."

"Nay, sir," said I, observing Mr Grand appear mortified, "I can't doubt that the lady is endowed with such high principles as will protect her from the temptations to which the possession of beauty and the natural softness of youth would otherwise expose her."

"Whatever she possesses at present, ma'am," says Mr Grand, "can only be bettered by example. May I hope that her aspirations towards perfection may be encouraged by the contemplation of the virtues with which Mrs Ward condescends to bless Calcutta? If the humble accommodation of a garden-house——"

"Indeed, sir, your kind hospitality overpowers me," said I; "but I am commended to the care of Mrs Fraser."

"Then indeed I won't do you the disservice of seeking to draw you in another direction, ma'am. Mrs Fraser is the best-natured woman in the world."

"Ah, now I follow you!" cried the Captain. "I take off my hat, I assure you, when I mention Mrs Fraser's name. The best woman in Calcutta, and the only person that don't know how much too good she is for Mr Fraser."

"What, is this gentleman unworthy of his lady?" I asked.

"Why, ma'am, he's a Franciscan," replied Mr Grand, as if this was a sufficient answer. "That's what we call the *thick-and-thin* followers of Mr Francis here. But besides that, he's a sour, captious kind of a creature, that don't perceive what he has to be grateful for."

"I can't say but Captain Fraser has had his troubles," says Captain Richardson with an air of impartiality. "Twenty years ago he was as fine and smart a young fellow as any King's officer I ever saw, though even then he had a way of getting *into the dumps* when he thought himself slighted. But taking part in the Manilla Expedition in '62, he had the misfortune to have an arm and a leg shot off, so that he could be of little use on board ship. My Lord Clive concerned himself for him, remembering that his gunnery had contributed to the great victory at Plassey, and he was given a snug *berth* on shore here, and named victualling-master to his Majesty's ships, of which there's few enough show their noses in the Hoogly. And if

you'll believe me, he has needed all these years to learn that the Company's captains are rational beings like himself. But nobody shall utter a word against Mrs Fraser in my hearing. Many's the young fellow from the Company's ships that she has nursed like a mother at her own house here, and afterwards at her garden-house at Allypoor to set 'em up again. Pray, Mr Grand, do the honours for Mrs Ward just here. I must slip into my shore-going uniform coat, though it's little likely I shall be admitted to see Mr Hastings to-day."

The Captain retired to his apartment, and as the pinnace now swung round a bend of the river, Mr Grand named to me the different objects in the panorama that displayed itself before our view. To the left were the four turrets of the Orphan Asylum, on the right the water-gate and river-wall of Fort William, the strongest fortress in Asia, and in front the fine houses of the Esplanade and Cheringee, with the Old Fort and Black Town in the distance. The shades of approaching evening bathed the scene in the tenderest and most brilliant of hues, casting over it so affecting an air of inexpressible melancholy that the ready tears rose unbidden to my eyes. Once more these were checked by the appearance of Captain Richardson, who came from his cabin in a fine coat of blue cloth laced with gold and having facings of black velvet, and announced that he had catched sight of Mrs Fraser awaiting us on the Gaut. As we approached the shore I perceived a lady with a countenance excessively interesting—if I may a second time employ a word sanctioned by convenience, though not by authority—but of the most extreme pallor, standing under the shadow of a monstrous umbrella held by a black servant, and dressed with great elegance but in a *dégagé* style suited to the climate. Behind her were two palanqueens with their respective bearers, and the necessary retinue of *chubdars*, *mossoljees*,[1] and other attendants that dog the heels of every person of quality here. Even before we reached the steps, Captain Richardson and Mr Grand, standing bare-headed in the fore-part of the boat, were calling out eagerly to know if there were any news; but Mrs Fraser could only tell us that the Judges, whose mediation had now been

[1] *Mussalchis.*

accepted by both parties, were to begin their deliberations after supper at the house of the Chief-Justice, Sir Elijah Impey, that Mr Hastings' bodyguard had been doubled, and that crowds were gathering in all the streets of the European quarter. Mr Grand immediately declared his intention of spending the evening at the Chief-Justice's, Lady Impey having given him an invitation to sup, and Captain Richardson went off to the Council-House on the north side of the Esplanade, where he looked to find the Governor-General, whose residence adjoined it, while I, having received the kindest and most delicate of welcomes from Mrs Fraser, accompanied her to her house in Cheringee. At her own door she hastened to welcome me again, and at the same time to entreat that if I could, without doing violence to my feelings, join her spouse and herself at supper, I would do so. Reading in her speaking countenance that this was for some reason a matter of moment with her, and not a mere piece of politeness, I assured her of my compliance. Almost immediately upon our arrival, there followed us into the house two or three gentlemen, each of whom Mrs Fraser invited, with the same earnestness, to *lay down his hat*, this signifying, as I found, an invitation to supper, which they accepted with a very good grace. It was not until Mrs Fraser was showing me the apartments she had prepared for my occupation that I saw the reason of these manœuvres, for then we heard on the varendar the *stumping* of some person with a wooden leg, and the voice of a gentleman who called for his hat and cane. Out flew Mrs Fraser.

"My dear, my dear, sure you can't be thinking of supping abroad to-night? Here's Colonel Pearse and some more of our friends awaiting you in the saloon, and our guest will honour us with her company to supper. Pray don't put such an affront upon them as to go out!"

The gentleman's reply I could not distinguish, but it had something of the sound of a growl. I judged, however, that Mrs Fraser's entreaties prevailed, for I heard her spouse countermand his ordered palanqueen, and when she carried me into the saloon he came forward to greet me with an extreme civility.

I did not find in his countenance the roughness I had expected, nor in his manners the negligence I had feared to see towards his lovely wife, who appeared to divine his wishes and fulfil them with the most punctual affection, and I began to hope that my fellow-voyagers had been mistaken in their estimate of his character. Anxiety still hovered, however, on Mrs Fraser's brow, and I was not long in divining the reason. The conversation at table turned naturally upon public events, and before very long a hot discussion was on foot, Mr Fraser contending that the root of all the dissension in the Council was the casting-vote possessed by the Governor-General, permitting him to think himself of greater consequence than the members severally, while the other gentlemen asserted the whole mischief to spring from the power of the members to coerce the Governor and override his decisions by a bare majority of votes.

"Why," says Mr Fraser, growing warm, "as if to display still more openly the iniquity of this *casting-vote system*, here we're bound to have another instance of it to-night. Unless Mr Justice Hyde be converted by miracle, I don't doubt to have to congratulate you all on seeing Hastings re-established in the chair by the casting-vote of Sir Elijah Impey."

"And why is Mr Hyde to be converted, and not Mr Chambers or Mr Lemaistre?" asked Colonel Pearse, a gentleman whose quiet but resolved air reflected honour upon his military profession. "There have been times, sir, when a bench of Judges have voted unanimously in response to their conscience, deaf to the voice of party."

"Ay, sir, and when they have voted unanimously to put an innocent person to death," was the instant reply.

"Pray, sir, may I ask at what your language points?" asked a brisk young gentleman of a legal aspect, growing red.

"To be sure you may, sir. To the murder of Maharaja Nundocomar."

"Sure, my dear," said Mrs Fraser piteously, "you won't return to these ancient affairs now? This is poor entertainment for Mrs Ward."

"Is the lady a *Hastingsite?*" asked Mr Fraser in a surly tone.

"Why, sir," said Colonel Pearse kindly, "Mrs Ward han't any politics as yet. She's but a *tazee wilaut*,[1] as we all were once, even the Judges. Are you acquainted, ma'am"—he turned to me—"with the good kind heart of Mr Justice Chambers? When he landed here first he was much distressed by the bare feet of the blackfellows who crowded to see the arrival of the legal gentlemen. 'Ah, brother, brother,' says he, shaking his head, to Mr Lemaistre, 'our Court is established none too soon! I trust that in a few months at most we shall have these victims of oppression all comfortably provided with shoes and stockings.'"

There was a general laugh at this, but Mr Fraser, with great resolution, persisted, "Nundocomar, sir, was murdered by the Supreme Court."

"Pardon me, sir," said Colonel Pearse very mildly, "if I say that the event—which I myself regret—is amply to be accounted for by the circumstances. You have a bench of Judges very forward to insist upon their prerogative, and anxious to establish in India every point of British law, a criminal found guilty after a most patient trial——"

"And a Governor-General to be obliged by his death—you forget that," put in Mr Fraser.

"You'll permit me to say, sir, that there's a slight tincture of the fallacy *post hoc ergo propter hoc* in your words—which in no place but your own house could I have heard you utter without resenting. The death of Nundocomar rids Mr Hastings of an annoyance—put it at the worst, a danger—therefore Mr Hastings brought about his death. As well say that if a tree falls, and pins to the ground a tyger that was about to spring on me, I brought about the fall of the tree."

"But you'll allow that Hastings made no attempt to save the fellow."

"Ah, sir, that were to expect too much of Mr Hastings. To set himself to save the wretch at whose instigation his character had been defamed, and himself browbeat in his own Council, would be more than human."

"I must say," put in Mrs Fraser, "that though as a Christian

[1] Anglo-Hindustani for "a new arrival."

I had rejoiced to see Mr Hastings take that course, I could not look for it from him as a man."

"And pray, sir," cried the legal gentleman, finding himself reinforced, "what of Nundocomar's movers and patrons, the majority in the Council? They had urged the wretch on, secure in their favour, to his worst slanders. They supported him with all their might, then forsook him, and so far from endeavouring for his safety, moved that his humble petition be burnt by the common hangman!"

"I had always believed that having discovered the vileness of their instrument, they cast him off in the most marked manner possible," said the Colonel.

This brought up Mr Fraser in a rage. "No, sir," he cried, "they consulted their own safety. Hastings was desperate; the Judges, ready for any excesses, were at his beck and call. The Majority held their tongues, like wise men."

"They did, sir," said the Colonel very quietly, "and this though they were still the Majority, and sole rulers in Bengall. They could have ordered and enforced a reprieve, but they did nothing."

"Perhaps, Colonel, Nundocomar dead suited their purpose better than Nundocomar living," said the legal gentleman.

"I should be sorry to think that, sir. If those three gentlemen, possessing the power to save him, saw put to death a person whom they believed innocent, solely to give them a cry against Mr Hastings and the Judges, I say that even if these were as guilty as they allege, their own guilt was far greater."

"Sure, you should have been a judge yourself, Colonel, instead of wearing the Company's uniform," says Mr Fraser. "Pray, what has happened to your guns to-night, that you leave 'em unprotected at a time of such commotion?"

"I thank you, sir; my guns are well looked after. In fact, if I may say it, I can lay my hand upon them should I want them."

"And if anybody should interfere with this handling, Colonel?"

"Why, sir, that would prove to be a game at which two can play."

I saw Mrs Fraser grow deadly white, and guessed that the Colonel's presence this evening was designed as a check on the activities of my too vigorous host. It might even be that he had orders to keep him, though without applying coercion, from leaving his house.

"We all know that Colonel Pearse will let nothing come between him and his duty," said Mrs Fraser in a trembling voice.

The Colonel bowed to her. "I thank you, ma'am; and I trust Mr Fraser won't take it amiss if I say that duty becomes doubly dear when owed to so considerate and benevolent a patron as Mr Hastings."

"True! true! well said!" came from the gentlemen round the table.

Mr Fraser regarded them with a gloomy air, then, meeting perhaps his lady's anxious gaze, laughed harshly.

"Well, well! have it your own way," said he; "but let Hastings take care that his obliging friends the Judges don't become too much aware of their power. They may yet ruin as well as save him by a casting-vote."

But in thus insisting on the certainty of the matter's being given in favour of Mr Hastings by the casting-vote of the Chief-Justice, Mr Fraser was mistaken. When Mr Grand presented himself early the next day, after an evening spent so agreeably that the company, my Lady Impey among them, did not leave the supper-table till two in the morning, he informed us that the decision of the Judges, which was given at four o'clock, was, without a single dissentient, unanimous in favour of Mr Hastings—an assurance he had gained by intercepting the attendants who bore the news to their respective masters, the parties interested.

CHAPTER III.

A MARRIAGE.

BUXERAUTHUNGE, *August ye 7th*, 1777.

I had hoped to be able to continue uninterrupted the recital of my Calcutta experiences, the composition of which has vastly alleviated my solitary hours during the past week, but I am tempted to record first an incident of my existence here which has caused me some annoyance. I was quietly occupied with my writing this morning when the woman Silina, who came with me from Calcutta, burst in upon me, the most shocking sight conceivable. Her jacket and cloth were torn to shreds, entire handfuls of hair appeared to have been snatched from her head, and her countenance was disfigured by wounds and scratches. Loudly bewailing and excusing herself in the same breath, she informed me that she had become involved in a slight altercation with one of the Begum's women, which had quickly proceeded to blows; and while engaged with her antagonist, she had been set upon by all the rest and used in this inhuman way. On my asking her how the quarrel had arisen which had proceeded to such lengths, she confessed that she had been at enmity with the Begum's attendants ever since our arrival, but that hostilities had hitherto been confined to the exchange of the most virulent abuse of each other and the employer of each, although she persisted, and in this I could not shake her, that the Begum's women were inspired by their mistress in their inimical conduct. The unfortunate creature desired leave to return at once to Calcutta; but on my asking her reproachfully how she would answer to Mrs Fraser for leaving me solitary in a house where she believed the inmates hostile to me, she consented, though with reluctance, to remain, and on my promising her a new cloth the matter dropped, though I was determined to lodge a serious complaint with my cousin Alexander.

Only an hour or two ago, however, Silina crept in again,

having just received from an upper servant of my aunt's the materials for her evening meal. In an alarmed whisper she told me that, moved by a sudden and most fortunate suspicion, she had offered a portion of the rice to a tame ape, the most thievish brute in the world, which is left at large in the court-yard. The creature, having smelt at the food, rejected it with contempt, and this, said Silina, was a sure proof that it contained poison. Astonished beyond measure by this assertion, I made no attempt to hide my incredulity, but she assured me that such crimes were the commonest thing in the world in Bengall, and declared that she could not remain to be destroyed in so dreadful a manner. Even my reproaches had no effect upon her, though she entreated earnestly that I would accompany her in her flight, as she openly styled it, alleging that she was certain some evil would be practised against me if I remained, and this she repeated again and again, in spite of my severest reproofs. Asking her what put such a thing into her head, she confessed that having heard my cousin Alexander reprove my curiosity the day I wished to walk in the garden, she had suffered the same quality to lead her in the direction of the buildings by the river, and had examined them, though without making any surprising discovery. In this occupation she had been disturbed by Mr D'Cruiz, who loaded her with abuse in Bengally, and ordered her off, leaving her convinced that to meeting him she owed her present situation.

I laughed heartily at these fears, telling her that she need not tremble for me, since I had no intention to trespass on the forbidden ground, but I could not do such violence to her wishes as to force her to remain in my service. I determined, therefore, to request my cousin Alexander to have her conveyed safely to Calcutta, on the ground of her disagreeing with the other servants, and to allow me to feed her from our table while she remained. The poor woman was much affected by what she called my condescending thoughtfulness, and would have again entreated me with tears to escape while I could, but that, assuming a tone of severity, I bade her be silent. I experienced a lively satisfaction in not having yielded for a moment to the infection of her fears when my cousin informed me at supper, with

a visage of unusual cheerfulness, that he trusted shortly to be able to place me in a position of independence. The fortunate issue of a venture from which he had hoped little had, he said, given him hopes of realising a sum of money sufficient to secure me a modest competency.

"Don't imagine I am ignorant," he added, "that this is only an instalment of our debt to you, but it shall all be paid, even though it keep me *slaving* till I am an old man."

"Indeed, cousin," I said, much affected by this speech, "you wrong me in supposing me so illiberal. Secure me but the means to support myself without burdening my friends, and I will give you a full release with infinite pleasure."

My cousin Alexander begged me to be silent, since such generous impulses must not be acted upon without prolonged reflection. His gloomy countenance did not brighten; but Clorinda, who had scowled at me throughout the meal on account of the servants' dissensions, relaxed her gravity, and behaved to me with an unusual kindness. How hardly must my poor relatives have judged me if they thought me capable of wringing from their toiling hands the last farthing of the fortune squandered by their unfortunate parent! With a melting heart I sat down to write the letter which Silina was to convey for me to Mrs Fraser, acquainting her that I hoped before long to be able to return to her hospitable dwelling, and take up my abode there in a situation a little more consistent with my punctilio than that of a penniless dependant, in which character she had last beheld me.

This mention of Mrs Fraser recalls me by a natural transition to the conversation which I held with her on the morning following my arrival in Calcutta. Once assured of the happy issue for Mr Hastings of the attempted revolution, I had expressed some surprise that Mr Fraser should be so convinced an antagonist of that gentleman.

"Why, indeed," says Mrs Fraser, "I don't quite know how 'tis, for Mr Hastings hath always showed my husband a prodigious kindness. But Mr Fraser is by birth a Scotchman, and most of the gentlemen of that nation here have combined to support the General and Mr Francis. And he has also in his

disposition an odd generous strain, leading him always to adopt the less popular side in any quarrel,—and you'll have found little difficulty in determining which that is in this case."

"I wonder he an't willing to be guided by you, my dear ma'am," said I.

"Do you?" she asked me with a smile. "Sure I think I am monstrous fortunate that Mr Fraser don't insist on my accommodating my opinions to his own."

"Oh, madam, what a visto of alarm do you open before me!" I cried. "Is it the rule for a husband to be so tyrannical that one feels indebted to him for the mere permission to think one's own thoughts?"

"Not mine, indeed—nor yours, or you had not asked the question," said Mrs Fraser. "But 'tis much that Mr Fraser is content I should differ from him, though we both regret that the difference should exist. The perpetual contentions in which some households are immersed would be to me an unspeakable misery, and therefore I'm grateful that my spouse can allow me to see in Mr Hastings a good man struggling with adversity, without a continual endeavour to make me regard him as a mean-spirited tyrant rightly served."

"And you don't seek to turn him from his opinions, ma'am?"

"Nay; would my dear Mrs Ward have me show less regard for him than he for me? Besides"—and my kind friend dropped her knotting and gazed at the intricate painted pattern of the *checks*[1] opposite her as though she read in them a history—"she must remember that I don't behold Mr Fra er with her eyes. To me he remains the gallant young gentleman who perilled his life and his prospects of advancement for months together twenty years ago, that he might snatch from dishonour or destruction the unhappy—no, the happy—creature whom he loved. Will my Mrs Ward say that a difference in opinion, or even a slight touch of petulance—the fruit of many undeserved misfortunes—can ever make me think myself disobliged by Mr Fraser?"

"Oh, dearest madam," I cried, embracing her, "how trans-

[1] Chiks

cendent must be the qualities of those gentlemen whose cause Mr Fraser can adopt in preference to that favoured by you! Where does their special greatness lie?"

"In the mean arts of petty persecution," she replied quickly, then broke off. "But no, I can't judge them fairly. Yet you'll hear their characters discussed everywhere. Mr Francis, then, is considered extraordinary handsome by the ladies, whose company he much affects. He is of an admirably cautious habit of mind, in the style of a chess-player who sees ten several moves before him, and calculates minutely the effect of each before his hand approaches the board. But there's something singular in his temper which too often renders this caution useless. He is capable of the most cruel resentments, which he cherishes against every creature that he conceives to have slighted or opposed him, even by an accident. There's a saying that Mr Hastings never forgives; but I have always known him willing to admit that an antagonist might be a very good sort of man in all points save that in dispute, and more than once he has laid aside his enmity for the sake of public business so far as to invite the assistance of such a person. But if Mr Francis has once disagreed with a man ever so slightly, he conceives him deserving of the utmost infamy in every particular of his conduct, and this for ever after. Such is the rancour with which Mr Francis pursues his enemies that I can imagine him hoarding a grudge for years, and then seizing an opportunity to rejoice in his vengeance. But this slow process an't often needed, for he has the bitterest tongue in Calcutta, which has deprived him of more friends and envenomed the sentiments of more foes than most men have possessed in a lifetime."

"But what of General Clavering, ma'am? You speak all of Mr Francis, yet I thought the General led the party."

"So it is supposed, but Mr Francis leads him. I conceive the General is a good man in bad hands. He is brave, even pugnacious, honourable to a fault, but possessed of the most violent, most obstinate temper in the world; and this temper Mr Francis makes it his business studiously to inflame, until the General won't allow in Mr Hastings a single good quality. For the rest, he hath many adherents in Parliament of the party called the

King's Friends, and in order to oblige them, Administration[1] makes it a constant study to exalt him and depreciate Mr Hastings."

"From what you tell me of the General's temper, ma'am, one need feel no surprise at his ill-judged attempt of yesterday."

"No; it would seem that even Mr Francis could not hold him back. And yet—perhaps he did not try. Mr Francis has always entertained the most singular contempt for Mr Hastings' abilities and temper. 'A poor cringing wretch,' he has called him to Mr Fraser in my hearing. He has persistently misread all the sacrifices he has made for the sake of peace, all his efforts towards an accommodation, and refused to perceive that his complacency might at last fail him. I hear this morning that Mr Hastings and Mr Barwell incline to proceed to extremities against their opponents, declaring that the General has of his own motion vacated his seat in the Council by taking the oaths as Governor-General, and can't resume it. This severity is so unlike Mr Hastings that I can only suppose he has been driven beyond himself by the usage he has received, or else that he is desirous of placing the General under an obligation by withdrawing his opposition suddenly."

"But is there any hope that the General would recognise such an obligation?" I asked her.

"I trust there may be. The General is a good honest man, for all his fiery temper, and one that's likely to encrease in respect for one that has punished him soundly. I don't despair of seeing him more friendly towards Mr Hastings than ever since he landed, when he was ready to see crime in every action of the Governor-General's, and mendacity in each utterance. But I have little hope of Mr Francis. His power of active annoyance may be gone, but his tongue remains to him, with which to sow discord between the most attached friends, and plant poisoned arrows in the breast of generous confidence."

Little as I needed to be impressed with the foresight of Mrs Fraser, I gained a fresh admiration for her during the next few days, when both her prophecies were fulfilled. Mr Hastings was disappointed of the revenge he had prepared against his op-

[1] The British Government.

ponents (if indeed he intended taking it), by their appealing to the Judges, who advised him that he had no right to declare the General's seat in Council vacant, and recommended a reference of the matter to England on the part of both sides. This defeat Mr Hastings turned into a victory by displaying such urbanity as to conciliate the General, if not Mr Francis. Only four or five days after the attempted revolution he ordered a salute to be fired from the guns of Fort William in honour of General Clavering, on whom his Majesty had been pleased to confer the Order of the Bath, as was announced in the *Rippon's* letters. The grant of this honour to his opponent was considered a serious insult to Mr Hastings, as well as a distinct breach of the pledges made to him by Administration; but he discovered no trace of chagrin, and the General, now quite appeased, invested himself with his Red Ribbon and wore it with great pride to Council, where Mr Hastings gratified him further by ordering a circular letter announcing the distinction to be sent to all the towns in the Presidency.

Of the fulfilment of Mrs Fraser's second prophecy I learned from the discourse of her spouse, who *stumped* in (there's no other word for it), when she and I were sitting down to our late breakfast one morning, and announced in a voice of unnecessary loudness that he had just been waiting upon Mr Francis.

"Quite so, my love," returned his lady, with an air of satisfaction. "I knew that if there was but one person in all the settlement to attend Mr Francis's *lever* after the late events, that person would be my Fraser."

This smiling acquiescence appearing somewhat to disconcert Mr Fraser, he applied himself assiduously to his meal, but presently asked his wife whether she had made up her mind as to the course she would pursue towards Mrs Hastings, "*as is to be*," he added maliciously.

"I thought you had left that to my discretion, my love?"

"Why, entirely so, my dear; but, well—Mr Francis has just favoured me with his sentiments on the topic, and they're such as do him honour. He declares it to be an outrage for Hastings to force such a cr——"

"Mr Fraser!"

"My dear, you're right; I ask your pardon. To force such a person, I would say, on the settlement as the principal female in it; and he trusts the ladies will assert the punctilio of their sex by all the means in their power."

"And what may those be, my love?"

"Why, my dear, such as refusing to wait upon the Governor-General's lady, and declining all invitations to his house."

Mrs Fraser looked at her spouse with a charming sort of whimsical air. "Well, my love," says she, "if you forbid me to hold any commerce with Mr Hastings or his lady, be sure I'll obey you."

"You're pleased to mistake me, ma'am. You know very well that I never lay any sort of constraint upon your inclinations."

"Who should know it better? And therefore my Fraser will leave the matter to my discretion, as we agreed?"

"I hadn't thought to find Mrs Fraser approving such conduct as Mr Hastings and Madam Imhoff's," grumbled her spouse.

"The initial error of desiring the divorce Mr Fraser knows I don't approve—that I reprobate it with all my heart. But the force of the temptation that assailed those two persons no other can imagine—though we who have had the privilege of Mons. Imhoff's acquaintance may faintly guess at it. But when once the fault of accepting the suggested divorce is set aside, who can do other than admire the astonishing decorum with which both the gentleman and lady have conducted themselves, so that even the bitter tongue of Mr Francis can't say a word against them on that ground?"

"You have took this strange pique against Mr Francis, my dear, and no reasoning will tear it from your mind."

"Is it so strange, my love? Why, if an angel from Heaven were to honour Calcutta with a visit, before he had so much as approached the earth Mr Francis would have discovered that there was something irregular in the mode of his flight!"

"My Lady Impey hath signified her intention of not visiting Mrs Hastings," said Mr Fraser, with something of triumph.

"Under Mr Francis's, advice, my love?"

"What the—— What in the world has that to do with it

ma'am? Yes, I do remember he mentioned that he had contributed to fix her resolution. But what of that?"

"Why, just this, that I fancy the last word in the matter will come from Sir Elijah, and not from Mr Francis."

"That's where it is!" cried Mr Fraser in great heat. "These men stick together and bolster each other up—ay, and will hang together at last, I dare be bound. Because Hastings and Impey picked up their ignorance at the same thieves' school, the worshipful Chief-Justice must lick the Governor-General's boots!"

"Mr Fraser is then of opinion that the friendship of a War Office clerk, the son of a toad-eating parson about town, is so much more honourable than that of the descendant of a noble but impoverished family?" said Mrs Fraser, with considerable vivacity. "No, my love, forgive me!" she cried, as her spouse regarded her with extreme displeasure. "That was a speech worthy of Mr Francis himself, I fear. 'Twas from him I catched up that phrase of *toad-eating*."

"What! and you credit all the rodomontade that Hastings spreads about? Have you forgot what Mr Francis had from my Lady Ann Monson's own lips—that he was naught but the son of a discharged steward of her father's?"

"No, sir, I have not; nor yet that Mr Francis never betrayed this tremendous *fact* until poor Lady Ann was dead and buried. But we grow warm; let us quit this topic."

"Warm, ma'am? I never was cooler in my life."

"Very well, my love, then I am warm, and I ask as a favour that my Fraser will suffer us to quit the matter," and, accompanying the words with a charming look of entreaty, she prevailed upon Mr Fraser to comply. During the remainder of the meal he appeared altogether to forget the ill-humour into which he had been betrayed, and discoursed very civilly on my affairs, and the efforts he was about making to secure for me some maintenance from the wreck of my dear Mr Ward's estate. His admirable wife seconded him in both his cheerfulness and his benevolent intentions, as though there was not a topic in the world on which they differed; but I could not so soon forget what had passed. Mr Fraser's holding up my Lady

Impey as an example to his wife caused me a particular annoyance; and when I was alone with her in her dressing-room I made a remark to this effect, which she received with extreme cheerfulness.

"Sure I ought to feel myself flattered," she said, "when Mr Fraser can go abroad and observe all the excellent qualities of all the ladies in Calcutta, and bring home to me the report of their virtues in the confidence that I shall forthwith unite them all in my own person."

"Oh, madam, you will never say a word against Mr Fraser!" I cried.

"My dear Mrs Ward can scarce expect me to lodge complaints against him with her?" she said very quietly, but with a mild air of rebuke that affected me to a supreme degree.

"Charming Mrs Fraser!" I cried, "what an example do you offer to your sex! Pardon me, my dear friend, my foolish indiscretion. I am so fallen into the habit of judging everybody by my dear Mr Ward, that any deviation from his pattern is almost intolerable to me. But won't my Mrs Fraser testify her forgiveness by telling me something of this marriage that Mr Hastings is to make?"

"He is to marry Mrs Imhoff, a lady of mixed French and German descent, sprightly, and of a very handsome person," said my friend.

"But where's anything wrong in that, ma'am? for I'm sure both Mr Fraser and you appeared to attribute some blame to the lady and gentleman."

"Mrs Imhoff has obtained a divorce from her former husband, the Baron, in the courts of their own nation, on the ground of an incompatibility of temper."

"I don't understand, ma'am. You can't mean that the lady's former husband is still living?"

"He is, indeed, and married another lady two years ago."

"But sure it can't be his first lady's fault, then, ma'am? The wretch has deserted her under the sanction of some barbarous form of law."

Mrs Fraser sighed. "There's more than that. The divorce was the effect of an arrangement. Mr Imhoff is a strange rest-

less sort of person. He was brought up to the profession of arms, but had slight success in finding employment on the Continent of Europe, since he belonged to the Reformed Faith. 'Tis the only good I ever knew of him," said Mrs Fraser with a bitterness unusual in her, "that he did not consult his worldly prospects by a change of religion. Resolved at last to carry his restlessness into a new scene, he dragged abroad with him his wife, poor unhappy creature! married to him as a child by the will of her parents, and only too conscious that she pleased him no longer. I have heard from those who were their companions on the voyage to Madrass, that the slights and mortifications inflicted on Mrs Imhoff by her careless spouse—not from studied cruelty, but simple indifference—were such as would cause a high-spirited woman perpetual mortification. Among those fellow passengers was Mr Hastings. He fell ill on the voyage, and received the most polite care from Mrs Imhoff. The contrast of his elegant gratitude with the roughness of her unkind husband awoke in the bosom of the lady sentiments to which she ought to have been a stranger, and these were observed. To his eternal dishonour, it was Mr Imhoff suggested the possibility of a divorce upon grounds not recognised by our British courts. To him and to his lady, accustomed to hear of such proceedings, there was nothing in them of that shocking character they bear to us, and I fear Mr Hastings was too eager to clutch at his happiness to be nice as to the means of obtaining it. The arrangement was carried out with the utmost decorum, and much as I deplore the circumstances, I must confess that there's something noble in the patience which has been content to wait eight entire years for its reward. So untouched is Mrs Imhoff by those tongues of scandal ordinarily so busy with a female in her situation, that the worst malice of Mr Francis—which spares no one for whom Mr Hastings has any tenderness—can only attempt to cast a doubt on her original marriage with the Baron, not on the propriety of her conduct since he quitted Bengall."

"Dear madam," I said, hastily, I fear, "permit me to ask you a like question with Mr Fraser. You, whom so many regard as a model, speak of this gentleman and lady with sorrow rather

than reprobation, and yet you don't defend their behaviour. How is this?"

"I can't help perceiving that they have yielded to a very terrible temptation, instead of triumphing over it," she replied; "but how can I judge them? I have never stood in such a situation as theirs. If I had, can I be certain that I should have conquered?"

CHAPTER IV.

A SURPRISE.

BUXERAUTGUNGE, *August ye 15th*, 1777.

It happens pretty frequently in these days that I ask myself with an infinite impatience how it came about that I chose to quit the shelter of my kind Mrs Fraser's roof. 'Tis idle to say that I had never done so, could I have looked forward to the actual manner of my life here. I can't flatter myself that my presence affords any solace to my aunt, who preserves the most frigid demeanour towards me, nor even to Clorinda, who shuns my company now that she has tired of the diversion of turning over my clothes. It appears to me that I act as a check upon the natural sprightliness of my cousins, whom I can hear talking eagerly when I am in my own room, only to find them silent and embarrassed when I join their party. At least, however, I am free from one torment that beset me, the firm determination on the part of the unmarried gentlemen of Calcutta that I should not remain faithful another day to the memory of my adored Mr Ward. This phrase reads like the speech of a coxcomb, or whatever be that creature's female counterpart, but my dear Mrs Fraser would bear me out as to its truth. The gentlemen thought it no shame to wound the dearest sensibilities of a poor girl that was but three months left a widow, by perpetually pestering her to fill up the place of her departed spouse. Mrs

Fraser mounted guard over me like a dragon, so said her husband; but if she chanced to be summoned away for an instant, I had only to turn my head to find some smart young fellow at my elbow offering me his hand and heart, while tender missives lurked wherever I happened to cast my eyes. My toilet was loaded with billets, bouquets, and copies of verses; and though I frequented no entertainments, and saw no company beyond what was necessary if I was not to keep Mrs Fraser as recluse as myself, not a day could pass but some gentleman would contrive to get himself presented to me as a person eminently deserving my favour. For my comfort, Mr Fraser told me a wicked story of a Calcutta lady returning from the obsequies of her spouse in the coach of his dearest friend, and finding herself compelled to combat the assiduities of the gentleman by informing him that she had already contracted herself to a third party; but I continued to resent the attacks, which appeared to reflect no less upon my own delicacy of sentiment than upon the reputation of the beloved partner I had lost. Mrs Fraser compassionated me most tenderly, offering even to seclude herself with me for the period of the rains at her garden-house some miles out of Calcutta, Mr Fraser visiting her there as often as his avocations would allow; but I could not consent thus to be the means of their separation during the most unhealthy season of the year, and at this point my aunt's invitation offered a road out of the difficulty.

Mr Fraser and the lawyer he employed had thus far obtained little satisfaction from their enquiry into the affairs of my uncle and Mr Ward. Foolish buying and still more foolish selling, useless ventures despatched to the most improbable ports, the taking of contracts from the Company at prices which made it impossible to fulfil the terms, far less obtain a profit,—these things had left the poor Colonel bankrupt, and his estate at his death so small that even the fines due for the broken contracts were forced to be remitted. The sole possession left to the bereaved family was this house and parcel of ground called Buxerautgunge,[1] belonging to the widow as part of her jointure, and hither she retired with her children. My own desire would

[1] Basharatganj.

have been to leave the widow and orphans in the enjoyment of this pittance; but both Mr Fraser and the lawyer, for no reason apparent but that the Begum was of Indian birth, entertained some sort of suspicion regarding her, and spoke of sending a confidential emissary to enquire into her management of affairs. While this expedient was debating, there arrived a messenger from the lady herself, in the person of the venerable Banyan of whom I have before spoken, with an entreaty that I would make my residence with her in future. I have already alluded to the small knowledge of English possessed by this respectable Gentoo, and the confusion it produced in my affairs, nor will I conceal that it has once or twice occurred to me to wonder whether this confusion was altogether unexpected. But there is little profit, and still less charity, in such reflections.

Last night Clorinda and I were banished to our own apartments, not for any fault of ours, but because the parlours were needed for the entertainment of a nobleman of the vicinity, styled in Moors the Zemeendar. With this person, whose name is Raja Luckynott Roy,[1] my cousin Alexander and Mr D'Cruiz maintain a cordial friendship, to the great discontent of my aunt, who calls him with contempt Luckynott Roy Tellinghy, saying that he was once but a Seapoy or common soldier under the Colonel's command, having made his way to his present situation by alternate violence and fraud. It chanced that I enjoyed a glimpse of the Zemeendar on my arrival here, for the budgerow which conveyed me was detained in mid-stream because his was at the landing-stage, and I derived some entertainment from watching the gentleman land and mount his elephant. I saw only an elderly Indian much wrapped in muslins and displaying some handsome jewellery, but I fear he must have discerned my interest in his landing, for he sent a civil message through the Banyan that he was sorry to have incommoded so great a person as any relative of his old patron, Curnaul Hainiss Saub.

Had I known the only terms on which he is received here I had not stood watching him, for it seems that since the Indians

[1] Loki Nath Rai. *Tellinghy*=Talinga, a native of Talingana or the Telugu country, from which the best sepoys came.

refuse to expose their females to the gaze of Europeans, these maintain a like reserve with regard to the ladies of their families. My cousin Alexander and Mr D'Cruiz, therefore, amuse the Raja in the front part of the house with a *notch*[1] and a theatrical representation on the occasions of their meeting, while Clorinda and I enjoy one another's company at the back. Clorinda is pleased to compassionate her husband and brother very heartily on the necessity of showing civility to a *native*, for she has the strangest, and in my eyes the most ridiculous notions as to her superiority to the race from which her own mother springs, and she is so kind as to say that I shall share these to the full before I have been long in Bengall. Our evening passed pleasantly enough, for Clorinda was so good as to recount to me the course of her existence while my uncle was living. It was sufficiently shocking to me to hear that as a child she ran about in a short frock worn over native trowsers, wearing shoes but no stockings; but it was worse to learn that, attended everywhere by four or five Indian men and women, she acquired their customs rather than those of Europeans, sitting cross-legged on the floor and eating with her fingers. At ten years of age she was despatched suddenly to the best boarding-school in Calcutta, from which she was removed in less than a year, in response to the tears and reproaches of her mother, when she had gained but little beyond the correction of some of her Indian habits. Thereafter she visited irregularly a school at Chandernagore, a French settlement situated only a short distance from her father's estate, going thither when she was weary of the paternal abode, and returning immediately any attempt was made to instruct her. It was the custom at this seminary to hold assemblies of a partially public character, to which even young gentlemen, if recommended by inhabitants of the place, were welcomed. The several foreign settlements in this part of Bengall, the Portugueze at Hoogly, the Dutch at Chinchura, and the Danish at Sirempore, besides the French at Chandernagore and the British at Calcutta, are situated so near one another that their inhabitants form, as it were, one large family, meeting constantly at public and private entertainments

[1] *Nāch.*

of all sorts. The sole check upon the enjoyment of the young persons who make each other's acquaintance on these occasions is the fact that the denizens of each settlement are strictly forbidden to marry with the subjects of any of the others; but this prohibition is as useless, or even provocative, as such edicts generally are. My cousin Clorinda falling in love with Mr D'Cruiz, a handsome young gentleman from Hoogly, the pair forestalled, with an extreme readiness, the protests of their respective guardians, and ran away to be married by a Dutch Presbyterian parson at Chinchura, though the lady adhered nominally to the Church of England, and the gentleman to that of Rome. The Colonel's transports of rage on learning that his daughter had thus decided her own fate at the age of fifteen could not alter the established fact, and he thought it best to invite the young gentleman to form a part of his family in future. "Since when," says Mrs Clorinda complacently, "my dear Ernesto has been of the utmost service both to my poor papa and my brother; and if our affairs are at all recovering from the unfortunate posture they have been in, it's all due to him." Being ignorant of her reasons for cheerfulness, I could not well unite in it, but I fear my thoughts ran rather to pitying my cousin for the manner of her bringing-up than congratulating her upon its result

August ye 18*th.*

An event has occurred which fills my mind with the strangest, the most conflicting sentiments. Have I been made the victim of a conspiracy to defraud me of my rights, or am I merely uncharitable in putting the worst construction upon appearances susceptible of a very different explanation? So great is my agitation that I find it difficult to write; but I am determined to persevere, since that exercise itself tends to be productive of calmness.

It was sufficiently terrifying, when I had retired to rest rather more than an hour, to be awaked from sleep by a horrid tumult of shouts and shots and the clashing of weapons; but it was worse to have Clorinda burst into my room and shriek, "Decoyts, Hester! Fly for your life—the Begum's apartments!"

She was gone before I could jump out of bed, but I threw on a pair of slippers and a powdering-gown,[1] and followed her in the greatest terror imaginable along the varendar and into the long covered passage which unites the two parts of the house, and which was crowded with screaming women. The door of the Begum's apartments was guarded by two or three Moorish servants, armed with scymeters and bucklers, and one of these forced a way for me through the agitated mass. Clorinda had gained the place of safety before me, and the Begum, surrounded by her own women, sat as usual under her canopy of purple China gauze, among the cushions which form alike her couch by night and her throne by day. At her orders the women in the passage were admitted into the place, and forced to sit down and be silent in an outer room, under the threat of being thrown out to the Decoyts if they uttered a sound. I ventured to enquire what had happened, and by what terrible danger we were menaced, but my aunt, with an imperious gesture, commanded my silence, and appeared to listen intently.

For some moments we all sat like so many listening statues, until my aunt suddenly sprang up from her place with an agility remarkable in one of her age and constitution, and began to drag frantically at the cushions and the quilt of Benaris silk under them, crying out, "The *sundooks!* the *sundooks!*" This word means boxes or chests, so that I fully believed she had lost her intellects; but her daughter and the maid-servants appeared to understand, for they rushed to her assistance, demanding, "Where? What is wrong?" She replying, so far as I could judge, "I hear them digging! I hear the chinking of money!" with continued excitement, they made haste to assist her in rolling back first the quilt and then the *sitrinje*, or carpet of striped muslin, under it, thus disclosing, to my extreme astonishment, a concealed trap-door.

"Lamps! lamps!" cried the Begum, offering to strike Clorinda, who appeared to desire to detain her; and as the door was raised the light poured down into a sort of cellar dug out in the hill, and illumined the faces of several ruffians who

[1] A loose gown thrown over full dress to protect it while the hair was being arranged and powdered; used as a dressing-gown.

were busy breaking open the coffers stored there, and helping themselves to gold and silver coins. I catched but the one glimpse, for at the Begum's command the door was dropped again and made fast immediately, while she and all the other women united their voices in shrieking to the Moormen outside to go round and catch the robbers before they could emerge from the cellar by the entrance they had contrived for themselves. Whether the Moormen obeyed I don't know, but after waiting some time longer in an unspeakable alarm and perturbation, we were reassured by the appearance of my cousin Alexander, who, after desiring respectfully to speak with his mother, informed her that the Decoyts had been beaten off, leaving several of their number prisoners. On her eagerly demanding whether this had been done without the affray becoming public, he answered with obvious annoyance that one of the servants had been so officious as to run hot-foot to the Zemeendar and demand his aid, with the result that the nobleman and a posse of his retainers had arrived in the nick of time to assist in capturing the miscreants in the cellar.

"Then he's acquainted with the secret? He saw the money?" cried Clorinda, then broke off abruptly and looked at me, as did her mother and brother, with an expression that declared, "Whatever inopportune discovery the Zemeendar may have made, you've done the same!" For the moment, however, the significance of what I had seen did not occur to me; and perceiving that my presence was not desired, I asked Alexander whether in his opinion it would be safe to return to my own apartment. On his assuring me that it was, since the robbers had not so much as approached that side of the house, I summoned the woman who now attends upon me, and bidding a second good-night to my relatives, made my exit. It was not until I had regained my room that it flashed upon me that the existence of this treasure in the cellar gave the lie to all the protestations of poverty I had heard, and even cast a grave suspicion upon the circumstance of my uncle's bankruptcy.

. . . . . .

(*The next three entries in the original are entirely written in rude Greek characters.*)

August ye 26th.

I am become an object of the most painful suspicion to my cousins. Every word, every gesture is watched and weighed, lest it denote some scheme that may threaten their tranquillity. I cannot summon sufficient courage to ask openly for an explanation of what I saw, and yet I can't bring myself—as in my weaker moments I would gladly do—to offer to resign every farthing that is legally mine if they will suffer me to retire unharmed to Calcutta. I can't say precisely what it is that I fear,—or rather, the objects of my fears are so many that in a fashion they counteract one another. At one time, remembering the words of Silina, I anticipate being taken off by poison, and force myself to abstain from food until the pangs of hunger convince me that a swift death, however painful, is to be preferred to a slow one. There are nights when I dream that a renewed attack of Decoyts is taking place, but directed purely against my apartment, my relatives taking this means of removing me without imbruing their own hands in my blood. A curious glance or a rude word from a servant as I pass makes me shiver with apprehension, and more than once, in the agony of my mind, I have returned at night to a habit of my childhood and walked in my sleep, impelled by I know not what notion of protecting myself or seeking safety.

To-day I was seized with a fresh terror during a visit to the Begum, who received me with more distinction than usual, and desired Clorinda, who wore a somewhat sulky air, to interpret between us. My aunt's theme was the praises of her son, whom she calls Secunder, crediting him with all the virtues and high qualities imaginable. A few weeks ago I should have subscribed readily to this eulogy of my cousin, but the recent events seemed to restrain my tongue. Neither his person nor his disposition proved potent to excite my admiration, and I could not even command the art to praise his shrewdness as a man of business.

"Secunder Hainiss could marry any lady in Bengall!" cried the Begum at last, provoked, as it seemed, by my insensibility.

"Far be it from me to cast any doubt on your son's power of pleasing, ma'am," said I. "But I an't a fair judge, since

my heart is buried in the grave of my dear Mr Ward, and no other gentleman can hope to make an impression upon it."

"La! cousin, do you intend to play the Mourning Bride all your life?" cried Clorinda, with a laugh, but her mother appeared to have taken my last sentence amiss.

"Hope to make an impression, indeed! There's no need for my son and the Colonel's to go entreating women to take pity upon him. Any creature that's not thankful for his preference may do without it."

These words, which Clorinda translated with considerable relish, seemed to be so evidently designed as an insult that I rose, and desiring my aunt's leave to depart, returned to my own room much disturbed. I could scarce doubt that I had just had my cousin Alexander proposed to me as a husband, but why he should act by deputy, or why the proposition should be so suddenly withdrawn, I could not determine. I can perceive that he might desire to obtain the continued enjoyment of Mr Ward's property by marrying me, but I should have looked for some threat in the event of a refusal. In any case, my situation here is more deeply involved in mystery and alarm than ever, so that I am even afraid to commit my thoughts to writing without a disguise. The many pages of Greek I have copied for my grandpapa, imitating the form of the letters without comprehending a single word, will now stand me in good stead.

August ye 29th.

At length the frightful mystery is elucidated, and how much more frightful is it than I could ever have imagined! I retired to rest last night racked by the most cruel doubts, so that the images of terror imprinted on my mind communicated themselves to my dreams. I seemed to myself to be wandering in a labyrinth of passages and halls which led to nowhere, having lost the clue which had been placed in my hand as a guide. Rushing blindly hither and thither, and wailing in my despair, I came suddenly upon the clue I sought, and grasping it as my one hope of safety, followed its devious course. After pursuing its windings for many hours, as it appeared, the thread broke in my hand, and I saw a vast precipice yawning at my feet.

Catching frantically at a tree that overhung its brink, I woke with a terrific start, to find myself clasping the pillar at the head of the varendar-steps. The clue I had followed would seem to have been the hand-rail, which ceased, as was natural, when the steps were reached. Much embarrassed to find myself in the front of the house in such an undress, I turned back towards my own apartment, treading softly as I approached a window from which light streamed through the closed checks, and voices were audible. The window was that of Clorinda's dressing-room, and having no desire to interrupt her private conferences with her spouse, I was passing on quickly, when I heard my own name uttered in so singular a manner as to arrest my steps.

"So you have decided our charming Mrs Ward's fate?" said Clorinda, apparently turning her head to address some one who had just entered.

"As her nearest guardian, I have accepted of Luckynott Roy's proposals for her hand," replied the voice of my cousin Alexander, while I stood trembling with horror.

"The Raja's a fortunate man!" says Mr D'Cruiz, who appeared to be highly entertained.

"We are in his hands," said my cousin Alexander. "What else could I do? He promised that otherwise he would travel post to Calcutta, and lay an information against us at the Revenue Board for carrying on a smuggling trade. That would revive the entire question of the bankruptcy."

"But sure he has winked at our trade for over a year," said Mr D'Cruiz.

"He would declare he'd done it to get us the more completely into his power. We are in bad odour already at Calcutta, and he would carry all before him. And moreover, he's seen the treasure."

"But why not remove it while he's gone down the river? We could load it into the boats and find a safe hiding place at Hoogly or Chandernagore."

"Because he has set a watch on the place, and his boats are patrolling this portion of the river. No," said Alexander, with the air of an honest man who has done his utmost, "the only

ground on which I could have refused her to him was an intention of marrying her myself, and that don't seem to please her."

"Oh, I wish you'd heard her, brother!" cried Clorinda. "Chin in air, eyes turned piously to Heaven—'My heart is buried in the grave of my dear Mr Ward,'" mimicking my voice, "'and no other gentleman can hope to make an impression upon it.'"

"Well, the choice is her own," said Alexander unmoved. "I won't indulge her by marrying her against her will, though I confess I had been pleased to keep the money in the family."

"And to marry a *pucca Belaitee Bee-bee*, eh, brother?" says Mr D'Cruiz, the words signifying a genuine European lady.

"How often am I to desire you not to speak Moors, Mr D'Cruiz?" says Clorinda. "So lamentablee vulgar!"

"I have never pretended to the aristocratic quality of your future relative," says the gentleman smartly. "It's my belief that the Begum only consented to *sound* our amiable Hester on the subject of Alexander because she couldn't endure to see any connection of the Colonel's marrying a low-*caste* fellow like Luckynott Roy."

"What does his caste matter?" cried Clorinda. "Hester don't so much as know what the word means, and when she's married to him she will have something else to think of than his caste."

"Oh, he's prepared to act in the most liberal manner," said Alexander hastily. "He will send her some very fine jewels, which I shall take the liberty to detain until an auspicious moment."

"Of course he'll act liberally," says Clorinda. "Don't you remember, brother, Louise Rousselet at Chandernagore, who married the rich land-owner from Owd? Her bed and toilet were of solid silver, with curtains of green satin looped and fringed with gold, and a coverlet of silver tissue.[1] I can tell you I envied her."

[1] This wedding, in the celebration of which Brahmins and churches appear to have blended fantastically, is described in 'The Lady's Magazine' for 1786.

"Perhaps you'd wish to be in Mrs Ward's place?" says Mr D'Cruiz drily.

"Not I," says Clorinda. "I couldn't associate with blacks; it would kill me. But our dear Hester likes them, and thinks that there's instruction and entertainment to be derived from observing their customs," mimicking me again. "Now she can please herself with doing it."

"D'ye know, brother," says Mr D'Cruiz, "I fancy you'll find the matter more difficult than you anticipate. A lady of Mrs Ward's delicacy an't likely to enter into such a marriage of her own free will."

"My esteemed Ernesto," said Alexander, "she won't be asked. Luckynott Roy an't an over-scrupulous person, and he don't flatter himself that his alliance is a prize to be openly sought by European ladies. My connection with the affair ends when I have handed my ward over to him, and am assured that the ceremony has been legally performed according to Gentoo rites. The plan is this, and I think you'll agree it's an ingenious one. The instrument by which the amiable Hester resigns her claims on us in consideration of receiving a genteel maintenance will be ready for signing in a day or two, and then she'll be glad enough to take her departure in a boat I am compelled to send down the river with a cargo of rice from Patna. On a certain convenient sandbank opposite the Raja's abode the boat will run aground, and our dear cousin and I find ourselves in imminent peril. Luckynott Roy will rescue us in his decorated budgerow, and carry us to shore. While our own vessel is repairing, he offers to entertain us with a *tamasha*, and will take no refusal. The innocent Hester is unacquainted with the ceremonies of a Gentoo welcome, and won't perceive it when those pertaining to a wedding are dexterously interspersed. If she takes alarm, an't her affectionate cousin at hand to assure her that these are the most ordinary civilities offered to every European lady visiting the place? After a time, she will be invited to visit Luckynott Roy's *zenannah*, where his ladies are all agog to see her. During this interval her cousin continues his voyage, and unfortunately forgets to carry her with him. That is all."

"Alexander Haines, you are a devil!" cried Mr D'Cruiz in mingled admiration and reproach.

"Well, I'm sure I don't know why you should say that," cried Clorinda. "My brother is doing his duty in providing for my cousin in a situation far above what she could ever expect. There won't be the slightest hint of compulsion about the ceremony, and no one will hear what she thinks of it afterwards."

Was it possible that human beings—that a female—could dispatch an unfortunate creature to this horrible fate in so callous a manner? Clorinda's latest phrase aroused me to the full terror of my situation. I loosed my hold on the window-frame, which I had been grasping for support, and tottered feebly back to my own apartment, where I threw myself upon my cot in an agony of alarm and misery.

CHAPTER V.

A RESCUE.

BUXERAUTGUNGE, *Sept. ye 5th*, 1777.

I drag myself from my couch to continue my writing, fearful lest the visions of horror that crowd upon my mind should deprive me of my intellects. The week that has elapsed since my last entry has passed I hardly know how, since an attack of fever has conspired with the agony of my thoughts to fill both nights and days with images of terror. Yet I am not ungrateful to this distemper, for it has prevented the precipitate execution of my cousin's frightful plan. I am safe—but what a mockery of safety—so long as the instrument respecting Mr Ward's fortune remains unsigned, and I cannot with any propriety be invited to sign it while I am wrestling with the paroxysms of fever. This delay, involuntary as it is, is my sole weapon, though too often I am forced to ask myself, how can even delay avail me?

The morning after my discovery of my cousin's duplicity, I left my cot as soon as the first appearance of coming dawn illuminated the heavens, and dressed myself with extreme haste and precaution, so as not to arouse the lazy *eyah* at my door. I dared not carry with me even a change of garments, for my anxiety was solely to be released from this horrid house, but I put such money as I possessed in my pocket. Then I stepped out of my window, and, not daring to go round to the front of the house, let myself down to the ground from the edge of the varendar, and sought the shelter of the shrubbery, through which a *soorky*[1] path runs down to the river. No rain was falling, for the season of the rains is almost elapsed, but the ground was thick in mud, and the damp foliage soaked my skirts. But neither this, nor the fear of poisonous serpents which my cousin Alexander had inculcated in my mind, could avail to restrain me, and I hastened down the hill, cherishing a wild hope that at the landing-stage I should find a boatman whom I might bribe to carry me down to Calcutta. At least, I thought, I was free at this early hour from all fear of interference on the part of my cousins; but even before I reached the end of the path, the bushes before me were parted by the advance of a human form, and I was confronted by my cousin Alexander. For a second we stared one another in the face, both too much surprised to speak, until he recovered his composure sufficiently to ask me what I did there. I was mercifully preserved from revealing my knowledge of his schemes, though my conduct was excessively pusillanimous, for after gazing at him horrified I burst into tears, crying out, "I want to go back to Calcutta!"

The wretch's countenance cleared at once on learning, as he thought, that his plots were still undiscovered, and advancing towards me, he placed my hand within his arm with an appearance of the greatest simplicity and kindness.

"Why, so you shall, my dear cousin. An't we all engaged in furthering your wishes now? But you must go properly attended, and not in this dress. Why, we should have you down with a stroke of the sun in an hour or two. A straw hat, and no umbrella!" for I had put on a large gipsy hat, forgetting

[1] Pounded brick mixed with lime.

the customs of Bengall. "You an't in England now, you know. Let me wait upon you back to the house, and Clorinda will see that you're suitably dressed before undertaking such an expedition."

The disorder of my appearance, and my foolish utterance, had given him the notion that I was delirious from fever, and I was too much disturbed to do anything to disabuse him of this belief, so that I suffered him to conduct me back to the house and deliver me over to my woman, whom he rated soundly for her negligence, with the result that she has maintained an unremitting watch upon me since. The turmoil of my spirits was so extreme when I found myself thus thwarted that I was thrown into a kind of frenzy, which was only checked by the fear that if I lost my senses, the opportunity would be seized to carry me off while I could neither perceive nor oppose the design. In the hope of composing myself, I have laboured, whenever I could hold a pen, at this writing, to the unconcealed objection of my eyah, who once took occasion, as I discovered, to convey a page of my memoirs to my cousins, alleging that my writing would bring some ill fortune upon the house. Owing to the happy precaution of my having adopted the Greek character, however, none of them could read it, and regarding it as so much harmless foolishness which might serve to divert my mind from the idea of evasion, they bade her not interrupt me in it.

One more attempt I made to escape, with the most disastrous result. My woman had retired for her evening meal, and I was left, as I thought, unguarded. Once again I threw on my clothes, and, snatching up an umbrella, left the house by my former route. But at the very entrance of the shrubbery path there started up a great armed blackfellow to confront me, and two others to support him, who refused to let me pass, in spite of my offering them all the money I had upon me. They turned me back to the house and to my eyah, who rushed to reclaim me, raving like a veritable fury. That night I imagine there must have been some narcotic preparation introduced into the gruel which was brought me, for I slept extraordinary sound, and in the morning all my gowns and shoes had been removed

from the chamber. This insult I felt I might well resent, and I demanded an interview with Clorinda, who heard me with indifference, and remarked coolly that my clothes had been removed for the sake of my own health and reputation, which were bound to suffer through these persistent attempts at secret rambles, only assuring me that they should all be replaced when I had succeeded in throwing off my fever. In this pitiable situation I remain, watched day and night by a spy in my own apartment, guarded without by the Moormen with their bucklers and scymeters, and unable even to enjoy that poor consolation of turning my face to the wall to weep, for my cot is set in the middle of the room so as to catch the least breath of air, and if I remain long without moving the hateful eyah comes creeping round to peer at me, questionless lest I should be revolving in my mind some plan of escape. There is nothing I can do, no friend to whom I can appeal, save that Providence which watches over the helpless and oppressed.

CALCUTTA, *Sept. ye 29th.*

Returning at length to my journal after an interval of near a month, I am astonished at my own blindness. 'Tis natural enough, or so it has often seemed, to say, "Well, we can do no more; we must trust in Providence." But when that grudging trust has been justified in circumstances the most adverse, should not the reflection suggest itself that it had been both wiser and more graceful to have trusted in Providence earlier? Thus, at least, it is with me.

That very day on which I made my last entry,—almost at the moment, in fact, when I laid down my pen,—Clorinda made me a visit, bringing me my cousin Alexander's compliments, and he would be glad to wait upon me if I felt myself well enough to see him. I knew his errand; he was bringing me the instrument, the signing of which would place me entirely in his power. I asked myself whether I should refuse to sign it. But how could I do this without his perceiving that I had gained some knowledge of his scheme? Hesitating, I said that I was tired —that I would prefer to wait till the morrow.

"What! when you have been scribbling that nonsense all

morning?" cried Clorinda. "Don't be silly, Hester. Come in, brother."

My cousin entered, in his hand the fatal document which, until a few days before, I had welcomed as the termination of all my griefs, and this though Mr Fraser and his lawyer had both warned me against signing any renunciation of my husband's property in consideration of receiving a part. Alexander laid the paper on the table and made his compliments to me hastily. It appeared to me that his hand trembled as he indicated the spot where I was to sign my name.

"Cousin," I said suddenly, "let me assure you once more that I had rather lose every penny than cause you inconvenience."

I glanced up at him, but his countenance had taken on that morose aspect I have before mentioned. "You should have thought of that before, cousin," says he. "My honour is now pledged."

His honour pledged—to the Zemeendar, questionless! A feeling of sickness oppressed me as I signed my name and watched Clorinda do the same. When she had finished, writing with considerable difficulty, Alexander scattered the sand carefully over the names and rolled up the paper, saying with a forced air of jocularity—

"I thank you, cousin. This will smooth your way back to Calcutta, whither you're so anxious to return. I have to send a boat-load of rice thither to-morrow, and if you feel able to travel, I'll do myself the honour to attend you."

For my life I could not have spoken; but I bowed my head, and, like one in a dream, heard Clorinda say something sharp about answering civilly, and not showing much graciousness. She and her brother appeared to fade out of the room, and I threw myself again upon my bed, the eyah sitting cross-legged on the floor close at hand.

It must have been late in the afternoon that I woke out of the stupor which had fallen upon me, hearing, as plain as if a voice had spoken it in my ear, "Wake: be ready!" I had not even opened my eyes when I heard whispers in the room. One of the Begum's women was talking to the eyah. I had heard so much of their talk during my sojourn in the house that I understood

she was telling her that the Raja's ornamented budgerow, coming down the river from Chandernagore, had put into the Buxeraut-gunge creek to be seen and admired by my cousins, and that every one was running to the water's edge to behold it. Almost before I had finished my translate of the words to myself, the eyah was bending over me, and I could feel her eyes, as it were, piercing my eyelids to discover if I was asleep. I did not move, and she appeared satisfied, for I heard her shuffle out of the room with the other woman. The moment that the tinkling of their anklets had ceased in the distance, I had sprung from the bed, still prompted by that mysterious voice, and thrown on my powdering-gown and chamber-slippers. I had no umbrella, nor even a hat, but I wrapped a large piece of gauze from the bed-curtains about my head. I made no attempt to venture on the varendar outside my room, but ran quickly through the parlours and into Clorinda's apartments, guessing that no watch would be set on that side of the house. In some unknown manner the determination was taken not to make for the river, nor even for the direction of Calcutta, whither I should be supposed to aim, but to turn towards Chandernagore, where the inhabitants, if strangers and French, would at least be European and Christian. I slipped from the varendar to the ground, and with the utmost expedition darted across the space which separated the Indian from the European portions of the house. Once under the shelter of the outer wall of the Begum's apartments, and round the corner, I was hidden from the view of any one on the varendar I had left, and this shelter served me until I was so far up the hill behind the house as to obtain cover from the trees. In that part of Bengall the appearance of the scenery is agreeably diversified by slight elevations, dignified with the name of hills, and small groves of trees, and of these trees I took the utmost advantage, keeping them always between myself and the house with an art that was destitute alike of calculation and of practice. At the summit of the hill I dared not pause, for before me was a slope of tolerably open ground and a second slight ascent, crowned by a small temple or summer-house where my uncle had been wont to sit and view the prospect. This point once reached, I thought, I might venture to pause and

consider my future course, for I had no notion what might lie on the farther side of this second hill. On I went, therefore, though my limbs were failing me, accomplishing the descent in a sort of awkward run, and struggling up the opposite slope with so much difficulty as left me only strength to throw myself on the floor of the summer-house—not even to occupy one of the seats.

Extraordinary though it may appear, this excessive exhaustion proved my salvation, for the house being open all round, I must inevitably have been seen had I raised my head higher than the table. Not understanding this, however, I reproached myself with my weakness as I lay upon the floor, unable to move, hearing in the distance the noise of horns and shouts, which proclaimed that my evasion was discovered, and seeing before me the most hopeless region that I could even have pictured to myself—a tract of flat country, all under water save for the raised paths between the rice-fields, with no shelter or cover until a distant grove, almost at its extreme limit, marked the probable site of a village. I had raised my head sufficiently to contemplate this prospect with absolute despair, when a shadow fell across the floor, and I turned to find myself face to face with Mr D'Cruiz. He was alone, his footsteps making no sound on the grass, and I needed no one to tell me that he had run up to this point on the bare chance of my having taken the direction of Chandernagore, secure of catching sight of me if I was trying to traverse the inundated plain. Before he could make any signal, I threw myself across the floor and clasped his knees, remembering only that he was the sole member of the family that had exhibited the faintest approach to pity for the fate to which they had destined me.

"Only go back and say nothing!" I implored him. "Only do not see me. I ask no more. Oh, sir, I know all!" as he hesitated.

"You know!" The hand he had raised to his mouth to give a halloo dropped to his side. "I can't do it!" he cried, with a Portugueze oath. "See," he said hastily, disengaging my hands, but not roughly, "I will leave you my cane. Cross the rice-fields as soon as dusk falls. In the village over there is an old

Christian woman who will shelter you for the night if you mention me. She was my nurse. Her name is Dianna."

And without giving me time to murmur a word of thanks he ran down the slope again, shouting to those on the opposite hill that he had found no trace of me. His kindness seemed to restore the strength to my limbs, and I waited impatiently till the atmosphere had lost its dangerous clearness, and set out again on my journey, grasping the stick. On the terrors of that walk I need not enlarge. Darkness fell before I had completed a quarter of it, and I was compelled to feel every step of my way, thoughts of tygers, serpents, and Decoyts thrusting themselves into my mind to enhance the actual perils of the muddy and contracted path, bordered on either side by an expanse of water of unknown depth. When at length I reached the village the inhabitants were all retired to rest, and took me for a robber; but I came at last upon a sleepy watchman who carried me unwillingly to old Dianna's door, demanding and receiving my cane in recompense. Nothing but the name of Mr D'Cruiz would have availed to gain me admittance, for I was a sad disreputable object, with my clothes torn and loaded with mud, and one slipper lost. From the other I was able to remove a silver buckle, which, presented to the old woman, served slightly to mitigate her objections when I was inside her house. I can't pretend to say that this asylum was an elegant, or even an agreeable abode, sheltering, as it did, old Dianna, her daughter Maria, and half-a-dozen brown grandchildren. Relegated to the outskirts of the village on account of her religion, my good Samaritan appeared to me to resemble very closely the pagans who were her neighbours, for she refused to allow me to eat or drink out of her vessels, so that I had to be content with a leaf and a broken potsherd. But she gave me food and shelter when I was in the most crying need of both, and for this I must always be grateful to her; and when I stretched myself on a mat upon her humble floor, after a meal of *chupatty* and water, I could be conscious of nothing but an overpowering gratitude both to Heaven and its instruments.

In the morning there were fresh troubles before me. The exertion of the previous day had left me so stiff and footsore as to be scarce able to move, and to this was now added more

than a touch of fever, caused, questionless, by the exhalations from the rice-fields in the darkness. I had made earnest inquiries as to the possibility of finding some vehicle to convey me to Chandernagore, and had been flattered with the hope of hiring a bullock-cart belonging to one of the villagers. But this man now refused to embark upon such a journey without receiving beforehand at least a portion of his hire, and I had nothing in the world—not so much as a thimble—to offer him. While I was musing over this disagreeable news, the old woman was thrown into the most violent transports by the discovery that both her own daughter and my silver buckle were missing. It was the buckle which she lamented, supposing that her daughter had stolen it to sell; but to me the discovery was even less welcome, since I guessed at once that she was gone to Buxerautgunge to give information of my presence, taking with her the buckle to prove her words. On my suggesting this to Dianna she agreed with me immediately, saying that her daughter nourished an extreme hatred to Europeans, since she had been married to one at Sirempore, who discarded her when her good looks faded. Thus, then, I could only cast myself on the mercy of the old woman, pointing out to her that my being discovered would entail the most disagreeable consequences for Mr D'Cruiz, and entreating her further assistance. Her sensibilities also stimulated by the most lavish promises I could devise, she consented to conduct me to Chandernagore, and I hurried her start with the utmost impatience. But our progress was of the slowest, for Dianna was totally unaccustomed to walking, and I almost incapable of putting one foot before another; so that before we were got much beyond the village we saw approaching from the direction of Buxerautgunge a moving mass which she, better used to the sight, declared to be an elephant, attended by several men on foot. Now I had the most extreme horror of these huge creatures, induced by Clorinda's malicious tales of their being trained to pursue fugitives, and snatching them up with their trunks, hurl them to the ground again, or crush them under their monstrous feet; so that it was as though a nightmare had been transformed into actual life, and I felt assured that if the elephant so much as touched me, I must expire solely

of fear. For this reason, the sight which inspired Dianna with the advice that I should instantly return to the village and surrender myself to my pursuers awoke in me the most opposite sentiments, and remembering that the villagers had all seen us set forth in the direction of Chandernagore, which it was now certain we could never reach, I asked her whether there was no possible hope of safety any other way. To this she replied that by turning aside at an angle from the path we were in, it was possible to reach the river, though not any of the European settlements, and that at this season there were often boats with Europeans on board passing up and down, whose attention might be attracted, if they were tolerably near the shore, by the sight of a European female in distress. But in this deviation she would not accompany me, being persuaded of its inutility, and fearful of bringing on herself the displeasure of the Zemeendar if she were taken in my company.

Obtaining from her the utmost she would give, a promise not to betray the direction I had taken, I separated from her and proceeded on my way, leaving the path and crouching in the mud beside it twice or thrice when its windings brought me again within sight of the enemy. The point at which I aimed was a *tope* or grove far in front of me, which Dianna had indicated as occupying a slight rise overlooking the river itself. The distance from the village to the tope may have been inconsiderable,—I have since been assured most solemnly that it is so,—but to me it appeared that the whole breadth of the world lay between them. The sun beat down upon my head, for which I found the folds of gauze an entirely insufficient protection; my feet, now bare, were torn and bleeding, and an excessive languor pervaded my whole frame. Still I tottered along, noting stupidly the few landmarks, the passage of which proved me nearer to my goal, but restraining myself severely from losing time by turning back to watch for my pursuers. At length the tope was gained, but not daring to indulge my trembling limbs with a moment's rest in the shade, I pressed through it to a point from which I obtained a view of the river. Of the Ganges itself I thought nothing, though I had so long desired to behold it again, for beneath me, moored close to the

shore, was a whole fleet of budgerows, their ensigns and the elegance of their appointments indicating that they belonged to Europeans. Nor was this all, for within a few hundred yards of me was a party of gentlemen and one lady, discussing an *al fresco* meal beneath the shade of the grove, and served with the most instant care and respect by a band of black attendants.

But now, when my troubles would appear to be over, the most excessive embarrassment afflicted me at the thought of presenting myself before a gathering of my fellow-countrymen in such a state of destitution. The most poignant fears seized me on looking at the lady. She was dressed with the utmost magnificence, and appeared a good easy sort of woman, laughing and conversing with the most engaging freedom with the gentlemen on either side of her. But what would she think of a wretched creature, in a torn powdering-gown and no cap nor shoes, forcing herself upon her? I began to ask myself whether I could not contrive to attract the attention of one of the servants, so as to send a private message to the lady acquainting her of my situation, and entreating her to send me at least a gown and a pair of slippers, in which to wait upon her, when my deliberations were suddenly cut short. There was the sound of voices behind me, and, glancing back, I saw through the trees the hideous head of the elephant appear above the brow of the hill. Whether Dianna had betrayed me, or my pursuers had catched sight of me notwithstanding my precautions, they were on my very heels. I hesitated no longer, but, bursting through the bushes, ran painfully towards the group of Europeans. One of them observing my approach, and uttering an exclamation, they all turned to gaze, and I perceived there was a second lady of the party. I had taken her, as she sat at the table, for a young gentleman wearing his own hair, for her beautiful auburn locks were arranged in ringlets without any powder, simply turned back from the face and tied with a ribbon, but now I could not mistake. To her I directed my course, and fell helpless at her feet, grasping her gown, but incapable of uttering a word.

"Hey! what's this?" roared a stout gentleman who sat next her. "What are those fools of servants about to let such a creature intrude upon us? Release the lady, woman!"

He raised his gold headed cane, and I thought he would have struck me, but a second gentleman interposed.

"Stay, Sir Elijah. The unfortunate creature appears to be a European, and it's clear she's in distress. My poor woman, control your agitation. If you need protection, 'tis assured you, but try to tell us what has brought you into this situation."

"Oh, dearest sir!" I cried, and fell to sobbing so that I could not utter a word. Yet I could have blessed this amiable person, as he defended me against his friend. He was of small stature, and meagre almost to emaciation, but dignity and benevolence sat enthroned upon his brow, and kindness mingled with authority in his voice.

"Compose yourself, poor child," said the lady to whose gown I was clinging, and I felt her hand upon my disordered hair. "Is it dat your injuries are so grievous you can only confi le dem to a female bosom? Dese gentlemen and my Lady Impey will excuse me while I talk wid you in private."

"Mrs Hastings is always so amiable!" said the other lady in a spiteful whisper. "Does Mr Hastings approve her complacency?"

"He desires that Mrs Hastings will always follow the dictates of her own good heart, ma'am," replied my first defender smartly.

By this time I had contrived to control my sobs, and, still retaining my hold on my dear Mrs Hastings' gown, looked round me with eyes streaming with tears.

"Dear sir, dear madam," I cried, "I see Heaven has led me into safety. You won't permit an unhappy creature to be torn from your protection? Sir"—I turned with a sudden hope to a military gentleman on the opposite side of the table—"I recognise your countenance, though the disturbance of my mind has robbed me of your name. For Heaven's sake assure these ladies that I am not a guilty wretch, but merely an unfortunate woman betrayed by those who should have defended her."

"Pearse!" cried Mr Hastings, "is it possible you know the lady? On your honour, sir, who is she?"

I had unconsciously brought the most cruel of imputations upon the poor Colonel, but he answered my appeal with the

most punctual gallantry. "Why, it's little Mrs Ward!" he cried, approaching; "our good friend Ward's widow, sir. I have had the honour of meeting the lady at Mr Fraser's house, and of sharing Mrs Fraser's regret that she was resolved to commit herself to the care of her relatives, the family of Colonel Haines."

"It should have been prevented," said Mr Hastings sharply.

"She ought to have been made a ward of the Court," said Sir Elijah. "Then there would have been none of this pother."

"Have you been ill-used at your uncle's house, ma'am?" asked Mr Hastings, and the benevolence of his tones destroyed afresh all my self-command. In a voice broken with sobs I related my story, but in a style so confused, and mingling things feared so unskilfully with things suffered, that I could scarce feel surprise when the grave and compassionate glances of the company reduced me suddenly to silence. Sir Elijah had tapped his forehead with his finger, and Mr Hastings assented with a slight nod, but he spoke to me with the utmost kindness.

"Rest assured, ma'am," he said, "that you're now in safety. All the Zemeendars in Bengall shan't tear you from Mrs Hastings' protection. She'll carry you to Calcutta in her budgerow, and my own physician shall wait upon you. Have no fear."

I endeavoured to thank him, but fell forward instead at Mrs Hastings' feet, conscious only, as my senses forsook me, that I was still clutching her gown.

CHAPTER VI.

A RECONCILIATION.

Calcutta, Oct. ye 6th, 1777.

When I returned to my senses, a horror seized me that I was fallen into the hands of my pursuers, for I could not move. Presently, however, I perceived that I lay upon a cot in the

cabin of a budgerow, and that a sheet had been ingeniously fastened over me to prevent my rising. Beside me sat, cross-legged, a buxom black woman, waving a great fan of peacocks' feathers, and smiling at me with an amiable air when she met my eyes. The cabin was furnished with the utmost magnificence, and the toilet appointments were in the most delicate taste. Over the doorway hung a curtain of crimson Persian silk, through which the sun's beams were agreeably filtered, and by the shadows cast on the fabric I guessed that Mrs Hastings was sitting outside, under an umbrella held by a servant. Presently I heard a manly footstep approach, and the voice of Mr Hastings bidding the boatmen cast off from the shore, and then saluting his lady.

"It's long dat my Hastings is absent," said she. "Has he rescued de possessions of our unfortunate guest?"

"We brought away what we could, my Marian. There was a pert yellow wench, the old Colonel's daughter, who nearly came to blows with Sir Elijah—I'll swear she'd had her pick of the poor lady's clothes before the trunks were brought out to us. Her husband and brother were more reasonable—indeed, young Haines played the injured innocent so cleverly as almost to draw tears from us both."

"But what could dey say in excuse for deir behaviour?"

"They insisted that the poor lady was crazy, and had run away in a mad fit. Their proof was the most monstrous pile of paper you ever saw, all covered with writing, some of it in Greek, which they handed over with the most obliging readiness, confessing a fear of its bringing 'em ill fortune. Questionless, there was a mad air about it. But what is my Marian's opinion? Hath Mrs Ward shown any disposition to violence?"

"Not de least in de world. I haf subjected her to some slight restraint, lest a violent fit should seize her, but it is not necessary."

"My prudent Marian! I question the madness, as you do; but I have another reason. The poor woman has signed a renunciation of all but a small portion of her husband's property, and this they showed me to prove she was on excellent terms with them as late as yesterday. But she may have been in-

duced to sign it by such severities and threats as have resulted in a temporary loss of her intellects. Even the marriage with the Zemeendar may have been suggested as a means of terrifying her. There could be no question of it in reality, for he couldn't marry a widow."

"But did he know she was a widow?"

"Why, there you have me. On my honour, I can't tell. It may be young Haines is a more ingenious villain than I had thought him, though there was one thing raised my suspicions. Without the slightest enquiry on my part, he must have me examine his underground storehouse, where, you'll remember, poor Mrs Ward declares she saw several sundooks bursting with gold and silver coin. To-day there was nothing but the most ordinary household stores; but it was the fellow's ostentatious innocence made me doubt him. I'll send word to have a watch kept both on him and on Luckynott Roy in the future. As for his unfortunate cousin, my Marian will grant her her countenance until we can restore her to good Mrs Fraser's care?"

"Sure Mr Hastings has forgot de *pucca* fever from which Mrs Fraser was suffering, and de sea-voyage her spouse has undertaken for her recovery?"

"So I had, indeed. But if I know my Marian, our abode will be no less an asylum for the desolate and oppressed under her rule than was Government House when its master inhabited it alone?"

"Oh, pity me!" cried Mrs Hastings, as though addressing a circle of sympathising friends. "I marry a man of de best heart in de world, whose money is flung away by de *lack* to any person dat pretends to need it, and he expects dat I will think as little of his purse and his credit as he does. And I had thought to bring about a reformation!"

"Then you'll need to deprive me not only of my purse, but of the means of writing *chitts* for Cawntoo Bobboo to pay," laughed Mr Hastings. "My wise Marian may take my whole household œconomy into her hands, and I'll be grateful to her, but she must not rob me of the power to alleviate distress."

"Nor will she desire it," said Mrs Hastings quickly. "You need not bespeak my protection for Mrs Ward, Hastings. She

pleases me. My house shall be open to her so long as she desires it."

"But this would be excessive gratifying to Mrs Ward if she knew it!" cried Mr Hastings. "Come, my Marian, tell me whence has sprung this sudden affection for a stranger in one ordinarily so prudent, so calm, as yourself?"

"Why, I can scarce tell," says Mrs Hastings, with a droll air of hesitation; "but I fancy—it occurs to me—dat it was because she clung to me instead of to my Lady Impey."

"That's it, indeed!" cried Mr Hastings, hugely delighted. "My Marian is human, after all. Well, she knows at least that her Hastings won't thwart her in any scheme of benevolence. Take the poor little woman into your family altogether, my dearest, if you chuse. You know my desire to provide you an agreeable companion when I am forced to be abroad."

What answer Mrs Hastings would have made I don't know, for on hearing this benevolent speech I could not restrain my tears. Hitherto I had lain helpless, conscious that the conversation was not designed for my ears, but unable to move, too feeble to speak, and able to elicit nothing but broad smiles from the good-natured creature beside me. But the overflowing of a grateful heart served effectually to alarm her, so that she ran to call Mrs Hastings, who came to console me with the most obliging haste and the gentlest severity in the world.

For over a fortnight after our reaching Calcutta the next morning, there could be no question of determining my future, since a violent attack of fever held me powerless. Tended with the utmost gentleness by Mrs Hastings, remorse for the inconvenience I was causing her retarded my recovery, until her own words restored my equanimity in a measure.

"You would leafe my house?" she cried, with her sprightliest air. "But I shan't allow it, my dear Mrs Ward. You are to stay wid me for a long, long visit, and as soon as your health admits of it I shall begin to make use of you. Dere are so many ways in which you can gif me assistance, for I am not accustomed to direct such a family as dis."

Invited in so flattering a manner to become one of this family, I could only promise to use my best endeavours to improve in

health, in order to repay my patroness for her kindness at the earliest possible opportunity. I have now for a fortnight been permitted to rise from my cot, and to spend a portion of each day in writing—a pursuit that affords the liveliest entertainment both to Mrs Hastings and to the gentlemen of Mr Hastings' family,[1] most of whom I have now seen. Mr Elliot, a very sprightly young gentleman who is lately returned from a journey to England on behalf of his patron, who loves him as a son, told Mrs Hastings that he and his companions were afraid to linger a moment in my presence, lest I should *put them in my book*. This notion caused some alarm to my dear Mrs Hastings, who entertains very rigid opinions on the impropriety of a female's engaging in literary pursuits, so that I entreated her merely to permit me to bring to an end the narrative of my residence at Buxerautgunge, lest I should expire without recording the extraordinary kindness with which I had been rescued from that abode of terror. This she granted with the sweet affability that always distinguishes her; but having communicated her misgivings to Mr Hastings, he rallied her on her fears, and desired her to tell me that he would appoint me principal chronicler of his government, and call upon me for the materials of his defence whenever Mr Francis should succeed in bringing him to trial. This jest his lady understood as a full permission to me to continue my journal, and she desired me immediately to do so, laying aside her objections in deference to his pleasure.

Oct. ye 8th.

Having so much to write all at once, I am fallen sadly behind with my journal, but I desire to record before I forget it a conversation with which I was favoured near a week ago by Miss Touchet, a friend of Mrs Hastings and the most charming young lady in the world. Mrs Hastings being gone with Lady Impey to pay a visit, I was left to the care of Miss Touchet, who brought her knotting to the side of my couch and manifested the most flattering anxiety to entertain me.

[1] At this time the Governor-General's "family" still meant his personal staff, aides-de-camp, secretaries, and interpreters.

"Indeed, my dear miss," I said to her, "you're too amiable. I am infinitely ashamed to have detained you from waiting upon Mrs Hastings to my Lady Clavering's."

"Let me assure you," she said, smiling, "that my company wasn't desired. The occasion's at once too melancholy and too momentous."

"Melancholy?" said I, surprised. "How is that?"

"Sure Mrs Ward must be a philosopher, or does she think the loss of the poor General nothing to grieve for?"

"But his General Clavering dead?" I cried. It was Miss Touchet's turn to be surprised.

"He expired over three weeks ago," she answered; "and 'tis the saddest thing in the world to see the grief of his lady and their daughters. 'Tis not yet five weeks since Mrs Hastings, attended as to-day by Lady Impey, returned Lady Clavering's state visit upon her marriage, and now this is their fourth weekly visit of condolence."

"I trust it wasn't the General's mortification over the failure of his plot against Mr Hastings that carried him off?" I cried.

"Not the least in the world. Since his reinstatement in Council by the Judges, and Mr Hastings' complacency in honouring his Red Ribbon, the General had displayed the most gratifying affability. He was even desirous to attend the wedding festivities, but was restrained by Mr Francis. However, when Mr Hastings heard of his amiable inclinations, he went himself to the General's house and brought him back into the midst of the entertainment, where the attentions paid him, and our dear Mrs Hastings' elegant manners, so delighted him that he was absolutely the last to leave. Unhappily, such an evening of festivity, succeeding a period of disappointment and pique, proved too much for his constitution, and he fell sick. Mr Hastings sent his own physician to wait upon him, but the General preferred the surgeon who had attended him from England, to whom he was much attached. This person, mistaking the disorder, treated his patient wrongly, with a fatal result."

"But," I said slowly, "this must surely mean that Mr

Francis is now alone in his opposition to Mr Hastings and Mr Barwell—that these gentlemen have an absolute majority on the Council?"

"So it is," said Miss Touchet; "and 'tis in such circumstances as these that the prudence and nobility of Mr Hastings' disposition are so transcendently manifested. Mr Francis is powerless; as my papa says, he can do nothing but growl. But Mr Hastings scorns to take advantage of his situation. The dependants who were forced by the Majority into places of trust remain unmolested, with the exception of two or three whose hostility to the Governor-General has been too marked to pass over; but more than this, Mr Hastings, from the summit of power, has made overtures to his defeated foe. The very day before that excursion up the river which ended so happily in restoring us the company of Mrs Ward"—she smiled at me with an infinite grace—"he took Mr Francis aside, and, deprecating suspicion, remonstrated with him in the most affecting manner on his persistent hostility, desiring his friendship for the future. And figure to yourself the sole result—Mr Francis goes about Calcutta in triumph, telling everybody that Mr Hastings is afraid of him, and seeks to engage his support!"

"But how could Mr Hastings, knowing the character of the man, expose himself to such vile misconception?" I cried.

"In that," replied Miss Touchet, "lies Mr Hastings' true greatness. He can sacrifice even his animosity to the good of the state—a thing Mr Francis could never do. Our great ruler looks forward to the future. With this season's fleet comes out Mr Wheler, the new member of Council, prejudiced against Mr Hastings by the adherents of Mr Francis at home, so that the ancient struggle will begin afresh. By means of his casting-vote Mr Hastings will still be in the ascendant, but when parties are so evenly balanced, the Opposition are perpetually on the watch to *snatch a division*, as they call it, which is above all things to be dreaded in the time that's approaching."

"Why, what is there to fear?" I asked her.

Miss Touchet put down her work, and, glancing round the apartment, approached her lips to my ear. "You know Mr

Elliot returned hither overland[1] instead of coming by sea? Well, in Paris he waited upon my Lord Stormont, his Majesty's Embassador to the French Court and an attached friend of Mr Hastings, and received from him a piece of intelligence of the most frightful moment to be communicated in confidence to Mr Hastings and Sir John Clavering. A treaty of commerce has been signed between the French and the American rebels!"

"Then we're on the brink of another war with France?"

"Precisely. The news was sent that Mr Hastings might be warned in time, and prepared to anticipate any action on the part of the French, wherefore he proposed certain measures to the Council to be taken the instant war breaks out. Judge what Mr Francis' behaviour would be in a period of actual war when I tell you he ridicules my Lord Stormont's warning, and declaims against any measures being concerted against the French settlements!"

"But how can this be known?" I asked in amazement. "Sure the proceedings of the Council are secret!"

Miss Touchet shook her head wisely. "Mr Francis' resentments an't secret," she said. "He declares himself the worst used man in the world to all his intimates, and publishes also the occasion of his complaint. There are three young gentlemen, who lodge with Mr Ducarel at his house opposite Mr Grand's, who are called here the *Franciscan News-Agents*. Mr Francis resorts constantly to their abode, and they to his, and they trumpet abroad all his grievances."

"But sure the French will get wind of the preparations!"

"What's that, so long as Mr Francis be avenged?"

"Sure the man must be a fiend in human form!" I cried.

"A sweetly affable and entertaining fiend, then, ma'am. There an't a lady in Calcutta—not Mrs Hastings herself—but would feel flattered by receiving Mr Francis' attentions for an evening. He can twist my Lady Impey round his little finger, as the saying is, though Sir Elijah is *jaut bhoy*,[2] as we call it, with Mr Hastings."

"Is Lady Impey a friend or a foe to Mrs Hastings?" I asked.

[1] This meant either by way of Suez, or of Aleppo and Basra.

[2] *Jat bhai*, caste-brother, very intimate friend.

"Why, ma'am, she's both, according to the last person she's spoke with. I've heard Sir Elijah say in his rough way, 'My lady has an excellent good heart, but a monstrous foolish head,' and I won't say it an't true. When Mrs Hastings first came to Bengall my Lady Impey showed her infinite kindness, but when the licence arrived for the marriage she appeared suddenly to become aware that she would have to yield up her place of chief lady in the settlement. Whether 'twas Mr Francis suggested it I don't know, but Lady Impey went about denouncing the marriage and all concerned with incredible violence. Mr Hastings and Sir Elijah laboured to arrange an accommodation, and shortly before the wedding Mrs Hastings—then Mrs Imhoff—consented to meet her ladyship at an entertainment at the Governor-General's, but when the evening came Lady Impey sent an excuse. This produced such a coolness that I don't know how the business was managed in the end, but when Mrs Hastings sat up[1] after the wedding, my Lady Impey attended her, and waited on her also to Lady Clavering's, as I said just now. Indeed, my dear Mrs Ward, her ladyship's perpetual changes from amity to hostility and back again constitute an actual menace to the peace of the settlement. I believe there's an infinite deal depending on Sir Elijah's personal attachment for Mr Hastings."

"But is he also not to be trusted?" I cried. "I had imagined him rude and violent, but faithful where his affections pointed."

"Why, so I believe him," she said; "but you must remember the unfortunate legislation that has established in the settlement a Supreme Council and a Supreme Court side by side, without defining the powers of either with respect to the other. To Sir Elijah the advantage of his order is an object to be pursued to the most extreme lengths. Were he alone his friendship for Mr Hastings might restrain him, but he is unfortunately hampered by the other Judges. Of these, Sir Robert Chambers is the soul of compliance when his vanity an't touched, but Mr

[1] Brides, and also ladies newly arrived from England, sat dressed in their best on several successive evenings, to receive congratulations and be made acquainted with the gentlemen of the settlement.

Lemaistre is the most rough and overbearing of men, and Mr Hyde an absolute martyr to the assurance that all the world is in a conspiracy to rob him of his proper consequence. Whatever unwise measure is proposed by any of these gentlemen, Sir Elijah considers it his duty to press it forward for the sake of their common advantage, and he will support them in any aggression they choose to attempt. According to him the Court is supreme over the Council, and in this wild notion he has been encouraged by events."

"You mean the reference of the dispute between Mr Hastings and the General to them for decision?" I said.

"Yes, and even earlier than that. There's a very agreeable gentleman from Hoogly, a Mr Motte, who visits frequently at my papa's house,"—Miss Touchet blushed in the most charming style, as though conscious that Mr Touchet's company was not the bait that drew Mr Motte. "He's an old friend of Mr Hastings, and has a very grave distrust of the increasing power of the Court. I have heard him say that it had been expedient if Mr Hastings, much as he was injured by the wretch Nundocomar, had ordered a reprieve when he was condemned. The Majority, for the sake of their own credit, could not have refused to support him, and on the case being referred to England, the arrogance of the Judges had questionless received a check. As it is, they stepped in a moment into the possession of an uncontrolled power of life and death; and their consequence having been further augmented by the events of this summer, there's every reason to fear they'll proceed to such demands that Mr Hastings will be forced into conflict with 'em."

"And a state of amity between Mrs Hastings and my Lady Impey might serve to postpone such a conflict?" I cried. "Oh, my dear miss, you have led me to a topic that agitates me inexpressibly. How can I avoid seeing that my Lady Impey dislikes me? She can't so much as enter the apartment where I happen to be without a toss of her head. If I am a cause of quarrel——"

"A cause of quarrel? Why, ma'am, your offence is that you sought a protector in Mrs Hastings rather than in her ladyship. Had you addressed yourself to her, she would have stood by

you against Mrs Hastings and all Calcutta; but as it is, she conceives you have put an affront upon her, and she can't forgive it."

"But how can I support the notion that she visits upon Mrs Hastings her indignation against me? She possesses a kind heart,—you have said so; if I make an appeal to that——"

"Let me entreat you to do nothing of the sort!" cried Miss Touchet, alarmed. "You would only offend Mrs Hastings. Her mind is so noble, and her understanding, if I may say it without offence, so masculine, that she regards with some displeasure a very acute sensibility. Not that I would in the most distant manner accuse her of coldness, you know that. But she entertains something like contempt for those excessively fine feelings which cause so much misery to us females, and it would displease her prodigiously if you showed yourself aware of Lady Impey's ill humour."

Further argument on Miss Touchet's part was prevented by the return of Mrs Hastings, but she gave me an apprehensive and entreating glance as she rose. I appreciate her reasoning, but the fact remains that I am a cause of dissension between these ladies whose attachment to each other is so much to be desired. Can I bear to think that I am assisting to involve my benefactors in fresh difficulties? Let me rather be prepared to sacrifice the dearest wishes of a grateful heart if such a course would in any way advantage them.

Oct. ye 25th.

I have made my appeal, and with a result very similar to that against which Miss Touchet warned me. Going to the Library this morning to exchange a book for Mrs Hastings,—for I am now quite recovered, and able to serve my kind patroness in various ways,—it occurred to me suddenly that I might now venture to visit my Lady Impey, whose dislike of me was in no way abated, and I ordered my bearers to take me to the Chief-Justice's residence. I was received on the varendar prodigious kindly by Sir Elijah, who was caressing his favourite riding-horse, which he has trained to visit him every morning and eat bread from his hands. As he carried me to his lady's

dressing-room, he told me of a horse he had once possessed that was accustomed to accompany him like a dog, and even to follow him indoors, and so delivered me over to her ladyship with all the benevolence in the world. My Lady Impey appeared less pleased to see me, and enquired with some coldness whether I was come with a message from Mrs Hastings. On learning that I had visited her upon an errand of my own she regarded me with an extreme astonishment, and desired to know what I wanted. But now that I was come to the point, all the reasoned speeches and temperate appeals I had prepared forsook me absolutely.

"Oh, dearest madam," I cried, "what have I done that you should regard me thus coldly? Sure the unhappy situation in which I first appeared before you should have moved you to compassion, instead of the aversion which you can't hide!"

My Lady Impey appeared excessively surprised by this sudden attack, as indeed she might be; but she collected herself, and, with an air rather more frigid than before, begged to assure me that I had afflicted myself unnecessarily, since her thoughts had not been occupied with me at all.

"Then, ma'am," I said with a boldness that astonished myself, "why does your countenance always change when I am so unfortunate as to meet your eye? Why did you try to prejudice me with my patroness by repeating to her Mr Francis' cruel remark that I had a good notion of dramatic propriety in chusing the style in which I would implore her protection? Why do you endeavour perpetually so to disgust her with me, that, had she resembled other women, she would before this have dismissed me from her family?"

"I protest, you are the most extraordinary young woman!" cried Lady Impey, very red in the face. "Sure your intellects must indeed be disordered. Granting that I have took a distaste for you, as you say, what purpose can be served by thrusting yourself upon me in this indecent manner?"

"Oh, madam, can you ask? Can you imagine that I, who owe my very life to the benevolence of Mrs Hastings, could remain to be a cause of dissension between her and the sole female friend in whom her position allows her to confide? No, madam,

tell me that it is so, and the sight of the unhappy Hester Ward shall trouble you no more."

"I daresay you are a very respectable young lady. I don't wish to deprive you of the asylum you have found——" began Lady Impey, but I pressed her hard.

"Don't, pray, consider me, madam; I don't ask it. An unhappy girl, not yet twenty years old, bereft of her revered protector and cruelly used by her natural friends, might appeal to your tenderness, your justice,—but that I won't do. But if you are resolved to visit upon Mrs Hastings her kindness to the unfortunate object who has excited your displeasure, assure me of the fact, and I will renounce the shelter she has granted me, and, solitary, confront the cruel world."

"You would quit Mrs Hastings' family rather than involve her in a difference with me?"

"Most certainly, ma'am. Would you have the object of her compassion inflict injury upon her?"

"Noble girl!" cried Lady Impey, advancing towards me in a kind of transport; "excellent Mrs Ward! What have I done to wound so lofty a spirit? Come, let us hasten to your beloved patroness, that I may assure her of your charming unselfishness! Fear nothing from me, I entreat you, but count me also as a friend, and use me with the fidelity hitherto reserved for Mrs Hastings. Eyah, order the palanqueen!"

We proceeded to the front of the house, Lady Impey overwhelming me with compliments and assurances of her friendship. She was so good as to insist upon our palanqueens being carried abreast, which caused some commotion in the streets, where the Chief-Justice's chubdars had much difficulty to clear the way; and, reaching Mrs Hastings' house,[1] she took me by the hand while mounting the steps. My patroness was sitting in her dressing-room with Miss Touchet when my Lady Impey was announced, and, entering with me, threw herself on Mrs Hastings' bosom.

"Oh, dearest Mrs Hastings!" she cried, "forgive me, as that

[1] For some three years after their marriage Mr and Mrs Hastings appear to have lived in the house she had formerly occupied, using Government (or Buckingham) House only for official purposes.

amiable, that incomparable creature has already done. How have I misjudged her! Mr Francis persuaded me that she was seeking to rob me of your affection, but she has shown herself ready even to renounce your favour rather than sow dissension between us. I congratulate you on possessing her. Would that I had such another!"

Mrs Hastings, after her first surprise, responding with suitable acknowledgments, Lady Impey sat down to spend the rest of the morning with her. Mr Hastings, happening to enter, was informed of the joyful occasion by the repentant dame, whereupon he complimented her with several pretty classical phrases, such as that concerning *redintegratio amoris*, the rest of which I can never recall. As for me, I remained in the next room with Miss Touchet, who was oppressed with such agonies of mirth that every word uttered only increased her sufferings.

But when my Lady Impey was gone, Mrs Hastings rebuked me pretty sharply for my meddling in her affairs.

"Vat is it to you, or me, even," she cried, "dat Lady Impey has took a dislike to you? I do not ask her advice in chusing my dependants. And you—you—go to her, and offer dat one of my family shall quit me if she please to gif de word! It is not to be borne. Understand me, my dear Mrs Ward. If you offer to arrange any furder reconciliations, excellent though your intentions may be, my Lady Impey may welcome into her service de transcendent being she desires, for Mrs Hastings won't keep her!"

At which well-merited rebuke I could only weep and entreat her pardon.

CHAPTER VII.

A FAILURE.

CALCUTTA, *December ye 4th*, 1777.

My visit to Mrs Hastings has terminated, agreeably to my wishes, in the guest's becoming, almost insensibly, the confidential dependant. In conformity with the customs of her own

nation, my patroness would find in a minute supervision of the entire domestic œconomy at once her duty and her pleasure; but the demands of her situation, and the natural desire of Mr Hastings for her society at every moment that he can spare from his momentous avocations, render this next to impossible. True, there's scarce a European lady in Calcutta but resigns her household affairs entirely into the hands of her Indian head-servant, so that this personage must be consulted on the most absurdly trivial and intimate matters, and Mrs Hastings' activity not only lacks imitators, but meets with actual reprobation. Her example shames many females who are conscious that their husbands' purses would benefit largely if they followed it, and has caused a positive panic among the hordes of lazy rascals who attach themselves uninvited to every European household, and can't be shaken off. It's clear that Mr Hastings' establishment before his marriage was conducted with the lavish profusion that might be expected in the case of the most generous of men, surrounded by greedy dependants, and possessing no female relative to keep a check upon their extortions. Every Saturday to Monday he has been accustomed to entertain at his garden-house at Allypoor an indefinite number of his friends, persons of talent or conspicuous merit; and his house in Calcutta was—and for that matter is—liable to be invaded at any moment by gentlemen arriving from the coast, or coming down from the upper provinces, often with huge followings of servants. This magnificent hospitality he won't allow to be curtailed; and all that his lady has succeeded in effecting is the limitation of the numbers invited to Allypoor and the enforcement of some degree of thrift in the daily provision, though even this has stirred up much ill-feeling among the servants. In the constant oversight which is necessary if her instructions an't to be disregarded, she is good enough to find me of some assistance, as also in the care of her jewellery and laces. More than once I have even been permitted to assist Mr Hastings himself by copying out some of his letters for Europe, which must all be sent in duplicate by different ships to avoid the risk of loss. Yesterday, also,—I scarce venture to believe it, but I can't help hoping it's true,—I have done something, I trust, to advance

the prime object of Mr Hastings' desire at this time—an accommodation with Mr Francis.

When, three days ago, I received a chitt from my dear friend Mrs Fraser—now happily recovered from her disorder through the tender solicitude of her spouse and the beneficial effects of a voyage to the Heads—begging me to spend the day with her and assist her in preparing for the assembly she designed to give in honour of Mr Fraser's birthday, my first thought was to refuse. But since my dear friend promised I should not be asked to dance, since also I have several times assisted Mrs Hastings in this very manner, I thought it more obliging to enquire if my patroness could spare me. I found Mr Hastings with her, who was excessively entertained by my coming to ask leave to go out,—like a cook-maid entreating a day at a fair, as he said,—and begged his lady to assure me that I was at perfect liberty to visit my friends when I desired.

"Indeed, sir," I said, "Mrs Hastings' kindness has already assured me of this, but I had another reason for my question. Mr Fraser is unhappily, as you know, of the party of Mr Francis, and I may be forced to meet that gentleman himself at his house."

"And such a meeting would be improper, since you belong to my family?" he cried. "Why, my dear ma'am, 'tis the merest chance that you haven't met Mr Francis at my house. We don't carry our public resentments into private life here—or only when they are so acute that poor Mr Francis becomes indisposed, and can't accept invitations. If you didn't live so retired you might see him any evening seated between Mrs Hastings and my Lady Impey at the playhouse or at a ball, exchanging sweet alternate whispers with each in turn. My Lady Impey's a slave to fashion, as you know, so, hand on heart, Mr Francis swears he never met a female before who had the skill to divine what was being worn in Paris and London three parts of a year before the fashion itself could reach us. Then to Mrs Hastings he avers that it needs a bold and a beautiful woman to set her own fashions, and that until he saw her he didn't believe success possible to the experiment. Having set both dames purring with pleasure——"

"Mr Hastings, you make too free," says his lady.

"Pardon me, my Marian. Both the ladies are sweetly conscious of complete satisfaction — is that better? Well, then Mr Francis proceeds to infuse a little gall into his honey. 'How strange,' he murmurs to Mrs Hastings, 'that Lady Impey should care to expose her sallow complexion to the comparison excited by those magnificent pearls she wears! But of course they are by far the finest in the place. How much better would they become a fairer skin——'"

"Thanks to Mr Hastings' profuse generosity, I haf no desire to exchange jewel-cases wid any lady in Calcutta," says Mrs Hastings very composedly.

"And then to my Lady Impey, 'How odd is the fancy that causes Mrs Hastings to reject the aid of powder and the art of the hairdresser! To lavish diamonds on unpowdered locks is positively barbaric, more like a savage princess. And such fine diamonds as they are! To how much more advantage would they appear in the head-dress of a lady who knew how to use them!' and so on, doing his best to plant barbed arrows in the bosom of each fair, in the hope of their rankling. He'll tell my Lady Chambers how monstrous it is that Mrs Hastings should rank higher than a young lady of *ton* and the best society in Britain, merely because she's the Governor-General's wife, and I'll be shot if he don't try to make Mrs Wheler believe when she comes out that the newest arrival should have precedence over everybody."

"You alarm me, sir," said I. "Has the gentleman no good word for any human being?"

"Why," says Mr Hastings, "if words could slay, Mr Francis would dwell solitary in a universe depopulated by himself. My Marian, have you heard the latest maggot he has in his brain? On account of the assemblage of two or three French vessels at Chandernagore, he has departed suddenly from his incredulous attitude towards the possibility of war, and has gravely declared to his friends that I am in a conspiracy to surrender the whole of the British settlements to our friend Chevalier even before war is declared! What is one to do with such a creature?"

"Our good Mrs Ward shall talk to him," said Mrs Hastings.

"A little judicious praise is very pleasing to de poor man, and she must flatter him until he begins to think we can't be so very bad after all, since she finds herself able to support our company."

Thus dismissed, I had no further misgivings, and prepared with infinite pleasure for my visit to Fraser House. My dear friend received me with even more than her usual kindness, and we exchanged all the news of the eventful months since we were parted. Mr Fraser was happily detained in the town by his duties until evening, and we were able to make our own *bundobust*, which signifies to arrange everything after our own taste, which had the good fortune highly to please Mr Fraser when he returned, though he would questionless have desired to alter everything had he interrupted us at work. Not desiring to face the general company, I placed myself, when the guests began to arrive, in a small inner room, whence I could contemplate the agreeable scene, and where I was at hand should Mrs Fraser require my assistance. Several ladies and gentlemen were good enough to come and pass a short time with me, among them Mr Grand, who insisted on presenting to me his wife, the most beautiful young creature I have ever seen or could even have imagined to exist. The present style of wearing the hair, which requires in most females the obvious aid of huge cushions and masses of tow or horsehair, appears specially designed to display to the utmost advantage her magnificent golden tresses, beside which even the locks of Mrs Hastings would show merely brown. Large eyes of an exquisite blue colour accord well with the hue of the lady's tresses and the matchless delicacy of her complexion; but the crowning touch of beauty is given by what might appear a most singular feature, eyebrows and lashes so dark as to be almost black. To the impression produced by the extraordinary loveliness of Mrs Grand's countenance must be added the charm of that air of languor so noticeable in females born in this climate, and the enhancing effect of an attire of the utmost magnificence, speaking her a follower rather of my Lady Impey than of Mrs Hastings.

"Come, my Catherine," cried her spouse, his face illumined with proud delight on perceiving my admiration of his lady's

charms, "embrace the most amiable of women, to whom I have at last the felicity to present you. I trust you'll profit by her conversation, and do your best to alleviate her sorrows."

This address, which appeared to me scarce judicious, seemed to exercise a restraining influence upon Mrs Grand. Her embrace was cold, and she seated herself beside me without a word. I could have wished her spouse would have left me alone with the young creature—only fourteen years old even now—and allowed me the opportunity to inquire whether the mind corresponded with the lovely exterior, but he hovered about us in monstrous anxiety that she should produce a favourable impression.

"Come, my dear, have you nothing to say for yourself?" he demanded at last.

Thus adjured, Mrs Grand turned her beautiful eyes slowly upon me, and said with some vivacity, "I hate dese dull parties! It is so ver' tiresome of Mrs Fraser dat she won't allow pelleting at her table."

"Pelleting! What's that?" I asked her, pleased with the pretty broken English she invested with so droll a French accent.

"Oh, 'tis de finest entertainment in de world! One enjoys it at all de *ton* dinner-parties. One makes pellets of bread, and flicks dem across de table with de finger and thumb—so! Or some persons can do it by striking de table underneath, but dat's apt to warn de person aimed at. Dere's some ladies can shoot a pellet into a gentleman's mouth as he opens it to speak. I myself can only send one into his wine-glass when he raises it," she added modestly, "but I improve—Mr Barwell said so."

"My love, you'll lower yourself in Mrs Ward's good opinion by confessing to these childish pursuits," said Mr Grand reprovingly, much to my regret, for the lady was betraying a genuine interest in her subject. Instantly the vivacity died out of her eyes and the beautiful lips took on a pout.

"Why do you keep me here when you know I am dying to dance?" she demanded smartly, and feigned not to observe the mortification of her spouse.

I thought it well to interpose. "Indeed, ma'am, I vow it's

cruel to keep you here talking with a recluse like myself, when so many partners are sighing to secure your hand. Pray, Mr Grand, indulge me with the pleasure of seeing your lady's performance."

"You are a good creature!" says Mrs Grand, all smiles again, as she took her husband's hand. "I shall send you a ticket for one of my parties, and we shall all play blindman's buff—de most agreeable game in de world—and no one will be dull!"

For a little while I sat wondering whether I might venture to hint to Mr Grand that a slight degree of sympathy with his lady's favourite pursuits would be well repaid in the case of one so young and beautiful, and then Mr Fraser invaded my retreat, bringing with him no less a person than Mr Francis, whom he desired to present to me. Never having been so fortunate hitherto as to see this gentleman except in church, I had been watching him during the evening with considerable curiosity. It was not to my taste to be forced to confess that both in stature and in air he made a much more imposing figure than Mr Hastings, but I had distinguished a difference in their manners which pleased me excessively, so entirely, to my mind, did the advantage lie with the Governor General. Both gentlemen excel in that devotion to the fair sex, and that easy assiduity in its service, which is the mark of the man of *ton*, but while Mr Hastings endeavours to recommend himself by the most punctilious respect to the lady with whom he is conversing, Mr Francis advances with an assured air, and a compliment upon his lips, the reception of which he would scorn to question. At the very moment Mr Fraser brought him forward a saying of Miss Touchet's came into my mind, "I have known Mr Francis fling a compliment to a lady as a man would throw a bone to a dog," and I was prepared to prove to him that such compliments had no value for me. But he approached me with so benevolent an air, and inquired for Mrs Hastings with such an amiable solicitude, that I found nothing in his address to resent.

"Ah, ma'am," he said, when he was sat down, and Mr Fraser had quitted us, "you have the best of it, after all. Here, where only such as truly value your company know where to find you,

you are free from the necessity alike of conciliating the hostile and seeking to arouse interest in the indifferent."

This observation was so odd and so far from complimentary that I scarce knew how to take it. "Indeed, sir," I replied, "I'm happy in numbering few either of the indifferent or the hostile among my acquaintance. My seclusion here is due to a compromise between the desires of Mrs Fraser, who begged I would not shut myself entirely from my friends, and my own sentiments in view of my bereaved condition."

"Yet the bereavement an't so excessive recent?" said Mr Francis, his keen eye upon my white gown.

"If my appreciation of it were to be measured by my garments, sir, no depth of black would be excessive," said I. "'Twas a desire—a fancy, perhaps—of my dear Mr Ward that I should wear white."

"And is there a woman in the world content to make so singular a figure, and expose herself to possible misconception, for the sake of a dead man's whim, and that man a husband?"

"I trust Mr Francis is acquainted with many such," I said.

"Many?" he laughed. "Why, no, ma'am; but I'll grant you I know of one. But she's far enough from here, good soul!"

"You speak of Mrs Francis, sir?"

"I do, ma'am. I should be a poor wretch to be ashamed to own I have a wife that's the faithfullest, most laborious creature in Britain."

"Mrs Francis han't accompanied you to India, sir?"

"No, ma'am. When the choice lay between the claims of a husband and those of six young children, what was the poor woman to do?"

"I don't know, sir. I fancy that had I been Mrs Francis, my choice had been different." I stopped short, for Mr Francis directed upon me a glance of such sudden malignity that I was terrified. It required all my boldness to add, with a good deal of hesitation, "I may be wrong, but the claims of a husband, settling for such a length of time in so dangerous a climate, would be in my mind superior even to those of his children."

"I fancied you had been listening to some of the cursed

gossip of this place—this tomb of virtue and frugality, this haunt of all detestable enormities," he said, as if by way of apology for his glance, and then continued to rail furiously against the fate which had sent him to Bengall. "I am grown old in two years of this accursed country," he cried, "where the Europeans are without probity and the blacks without courage. Had my seat in Council been awarded me as the punishment for the crimes of a lifetime, that had been more reasonable than to proclaim it a reward. I come out with every plan prepared for the establishment of a system of government at once just, stable, and remunerative, and I find myself thwarted by a tyrannical Governor, a venal Service, a corrupt society, and a hireling judicature." He waved aside my attempted protestation, and continued fiercely, "I paid no heed to any of 'em. In those days I was the third part of a king, or even a whole king, since I could direct my colleagues, and some measure of success was attained. Then one disaster after another overtakes us, and when I appeal to those who sent me for my vindication, they vindicate not me, but my opponent, Hastings the corrupt, Hastings the traitor, Hastings the suborner of murder——"

"Sir!" I cried, "you forget I am a member of Mr Hastings' family."

His indignation cooled with a swiftness that was almost ludicrous, but the rage in his eye was succeeded by a hardness little less disagreeable. "Am I to understand that any member of Mr Hastings' family had still to learn of the hostility between him and myself?" he demanded.

"At least, sir, there are decencies to be observed in speaking of a patron to his dependants," I said with more spirit than I had thought I possessed. "But since you have furnished the opening, you'll permit me to say that this hostility is entirely on your part towards Mr Hastings, not on his towards you."

"My good creature, you'll tell me next that black 's white!" cried Mr Francis, with a harsh laugh. "Do you imagine me ignorant of the notorious fact that since Hastings has sought in vain to purchase my silence, he's leaving no stone unturned to ruin me—at once the witness and the avenger of his crimes?"

"If Mr Hastings' generous concessions appear to you in no other light than that of attempted bribes, sir, I can only pity your blindness, as I must pity the rancour which has betrayed you into so many acts injurious both to yourself and to the welfare of the Presidency." I brought out the last phrases with difficulty, for Mr Francis' countenance was livid.

"Upon my soul, this is excessive!" he cried. "You know too much, ma'am, or rather, you talk too much on a topic of which you know nothing. Thank Heaven, Philip Francis don't require the instruction of *petticoat politicians* to teach him his duty!"

"Sir," I replied, trembling, "the lion was once grateful for the assistance of the mouse; and if my poor efforts could induce you to take a juster view of the disposition and actions of Mr Hastings, neither your violence nor your cruellest nicknames should avail to keep me from making them."

"Then continue, ma'am, in Heaven's name! However blind and ignorant I may be, at any rate I know the folly of trying to stop a woman's tongue when it's once set going."

He sat looking fixedly at me, his hands in his pockets, his feet (Mr Francis has the handsomest leg in Calcutta) stretched out before him, and in his eye the most horrid mixture of malignity and contempt. I plucked up my courage again.

"I'll prove you unjust, sir, by requesting you to speak first. Mention any case of what you consider Mr Hastings' hostility to yourself, and I'll undertake to put a new complexion on it from the point of view of an unprejudiced observer."

"Unprejudiced!—Ha, ha! very good!" laughed Mr Francis. "Come, ma'am, I'll cut the ground from under your feet by a single instance. When there was that false rumour last month of the *Portland's* being arrived in the river, didn't Hastings send off Cockrell and young Elliot post to Ingellee, on purpose to meet Mr Wheler and engage him against me?"

"Why, no, sir!" I cried in great astonishment. "I have heard Mr Hastings and Mr Elliot speak of the matter repeatedly, and the sole object of the young gentlemen's mission was to entreat Mr Wheler not to engage himself with either party, but to preserve a strict neutrality with the view to an

accommodation to be entered upon later. And that accommodation, I may assure you, sir, was to be conceived in a spirit the most gratifying to yourself personally, and the most beneficial to the Presidency and its affairs."

"Pshaw!" says Mr Francis rudely. "I don't question your good faith, ma'am, but you have been made a tool. Hastings is employing you to circulate a misleading version of his intentions."

"Even were Mr Hastings capable of such treachery, sir, he would scarce have drawn out his imaginary scheme in such detail. I know for certain that all the points on which you were personally interested were to be conceded to you, Mr Hastings reserving only such as he considered of moment for the carrying on the government."

"Ha, ha! excellent!" cried Mr Francis. "And in the matter of patronage Mr Hastings was equally complacent, questionless?"

"Indeed, sir," I said with encreasing hope, for though he spoke rudely I could perceive he was impressed, "Mr Hastings was willing to leave the matter in the hands of the Council, trusting to the good feeling of the members to reserve him such a share as his situation and his long experience entitled him to expect."

"Generous, indeed, vastly generous! Madam, I owe you much, more than I can tell you, for the pleasure your conversation has afforded me. May I venture to say that it has entirely altered my opinion of Mr Hastings? Scarce that, perhaps; but you'll permit me to assure you that Mr Hastings also will be infinitely grateful to you for what you have said to-night."

"And you won't oppose the accommodation, sir?" I asked eagerly, yet not with perfect ease, for there was still a shade of mockery in his eye.

"Is it for me to oppose, ma'am? I understand Mr Wheler 's to arrange the matter, and prescribe its adoption to me. I am in his hands."

He left me, and I could not but feel hopeful that I had effected some good. When I returned to Mrs Hastings' house, Mr Hastings was excessively entertained to learn I had con-

versed so long with Mr Francis, but asked only whether he had confided to me that in his young days the ladies of Paris were wont to call him "le bel Anglois," and I said nothing of my attempt at conciliation. But that's a disagreeable word since the success of my former endeavour of the sort.

Dec. ye 18th.

Mr Wheler is arrived, and the negociations between him, Mr Hastings, and Mr Francis are being conducted with the utmost secrecy, while such information as transpires is eagerly seized upon by the adherents of either party. Mr Elliot met the *Portland* as soon as she entered the river, and, as it's understood, returned to Mr Hastings with the most gratifying assurances of Mr Wheler's conciliatory disposition and determined neutrality. But, on the other hand, the partisans of Mr Francis have derived great encouragement from the new member's behaviour at Budge-budge, whither Mr Hastings and Mr Barwell had despatched their coaches and horses for the conveyance of himself and his family to the capital. Mr Wheler preferred to continue his voyage in the yacht which had brought him so far up the river, and, not content with this, in itself a gross affront to the Governor-General and Mr Barwell, allowed the equipages to remain idle for four days at Budge-budge before signifying his pleasure not to make use of them. But, again, it was observed that the greatest cordiality prevailed when Mr Wheler made his official visit to the Governor-General; and though he has since been confined by an indisposition, it's well known that Mr Elliot has visited him constantly, and it's believed that Mr Francis was agreeably surprised by the generosity of the terms offered by Mr Hastings. Heaven send the affair a good issue!

Dec. ye 27th.

Alas, alas! what irreparable damage may be effected, even with the purest and most zealous intentions. The whole of yesterday I spent in my own apartment, unable to face the mild glances of those whose confidence I have so miserably betrayed, until Mrs Hastings herself came to my door and demanded of me what good I did by lying there weeping, and

whether I would not express a truer penitence by coming to her assistance, since Mr Hastings was to entertain all the officers and their ladies from Barrackpore at dinner to-day, and there was nothing for them to eat. I obeyed her so far as to force myself to rise and work; and now, while the company is at table, I force myself to set down the events of this most miserable Christmas as a warning for the future.

On Christmas Day Mr Hastings, according to his custom, gave a public breakfast at Government House, followed by a dinner to all the gentlemen of the settlement, and a ball and supper for the ladies, both at the Court-house, which alone offers the necessary accommodation. The breakfast was commended by all, thanks to the most punctual attention from Mrs Hastings and myself, who overlooked the servants in every particular, and we had no fears for the other entertainments, since all knew their duty. I assisted my dear Mrs Hastings to dress, and beheld her step into her palanqueen an absolute vision of splendour, so magnificent were the jewels that encircled her tresses and adorned her bodice and petticoat. I had resisted her entreaties to make one of the company, pleading my mourning, and retired to my own room, to recall sorrowfully my last Christmas, spend on board ship in the enjoyment of the society of my revered Mr Ward. The day was slow in passing, and the few servants left behind (for almost all were gone to assist, or to stare at the company, at the Court-house) appeared to resent my presence, which detained them from retiring to their own quarters. The evening was also a long one; and I welcomed the hour when I might take my station on the varendar to watch for Mrs Hastings' return. Several times I imagined her approaching when palanqueens, with their retinues of mossoljees and chubdars, appeared from the direction of the Court-house; but they passed on, taking the road either to Fort William or Chouringee. Then came two or three gentlemen on foot, tempted to walk by the beauty of the night, and having their palanqueens carried after them. They were talking in sufficiently loud voices, and I distinguished the words *mean* and *shabby*, and *a horrid mortification for Hastings*. But when they reached the varendar they were speaking of the fine figure

Mrs Wheler had made, and the envy and amazement of the other ladies at the monstrous great size of her hoop, and not of more intimate matters. Yet I feared that something was wrong, and made haste, when the tramp of the bodyguard at length assured me that Mr and Mrs Hastings were returning together, to await my patroness in her dressing-room, lest she should be displeased to find me looking out. As I took the jewel-cases from the cabinet, and laid them open on the table, I heard Mr Hastings' voice as he handed his lady to her own door.

"Your intention was excellent, but you are inexperienced in the conduct of such entertainments as these. Regulate my ordinary expenses as nearly as you will, but leave the *tamashes* to Cawntoo Bobboo in future. Understand me, Marian; I am serious."

"You are mad, Hastings!" I heard his lady cry. "I tell you it is all a plot of de servants, piqued at losing deir perquisites. De victory is won now, and more dan half de cost saved. I will be responsible for de future."

"No," said Mr Hastings, with an extraordinary firmness. "Such a thing as this touches my credit. I will expend every *anna* of my fortune sooner than I will fail in the duties of hospitality. Never again will I see Francis resigning his iced pudding because there an't enough for Mrs Wheler to enjoy a second helping! And whatever was deficient, the cursed answer was always '*Beebee Hushteen ka houcum*,'[1] till your name was disgraced in the ears of all your guests. The servants shall make the *bundobust* in future, though the effect of this ill-timed parsimony an't likely to be soon forgotten."

As he ceased speaking, Mrs Hastings ran hastily into the room and began tearing the diamonds from her hair, her visage pale with mortification.

"Oh, dear ma'am, what has happened?" I cried, running to assist her.

"Dose servants!" she cried, hardly able to speak. "Deir revenge—upon me—dey must haf stole de food. You know how nice a calculate we made. Deir was not enough—of anything. De table appointments were disgraceful—dishes un-

[1] *Bibi Hashtin ka hukm*, Mrs Hastings' order.

garnished, side-dishes wanting. We had prepared abundance—you will bear me out? Dey intended to disgrace me, to vex Mr Hastings, and now dey will again haf de spending of his money. It is intolerable!"

She threw herself upon a couch and burst into tears, while I attempted vainly to control her, mainly with the suggestion that Mr Hastings could not have been so angry as he appeared. Her disappointment and mortification were incapable of control, and it was not until the black woman at the door put her head in and said, "*Burra Saub hye, Beebee,*" that she was able even to sit up and cry out, "The door is shut!" But Mr Hastings, in his gown and night-cap, was already in the room.

"My Marian," he said, "I spoke harshly to you just now. Pardon me, my dearest, and attribute the unmerited severity to the preoccupation of your husband's mind. Upon your slight mistake, which sprang solely from a too keen regard for your Hastings' interests, I visited the mortification arising from the knowledge that my proffered sacrifices were all in vain. Messieurs Francis and Wheler refuse to enter into any sort of accommodation."

"De villains!" cried Mrs Hastings. "Is dere no hope?"

"None. Francis sent me a short flat negative some days ago, but I had hopes of Wheler even after the urgent interview I had with him on Sunday, succeeding Elliot's unsatisfactory visit. He refused the accommodation then, but I trusted he might remain neuter. To-day I find that he's given over body and soul to Francis."

"But what has Francis promised him?"

"He has probably amused him with the notion of succeeding to my seat, which he has already marked for himself. But, Marian, there is treachery somewhere. I hoped so to overwhelm Francis with the magnitude of my concessions that he must be dazzled into accepting them. But it's clear he was not taken by surprise. Questionless he's assured Wheler that my offering them at all was a proof of the weakness of my cause, and flattered him with the prospect of carrying everything before them until they can secure my recall. He must have been beforehand with me, and discounted each concession

in turn, till it appeared to poor Wheler that none but a fool would accept 'em. But who told tales?"

"Dere's no one in your confidence but Elliot," suggested Mrs Hastings.

"I trust Elliot as my own soul," said Mr Hastings shortly. but I, who had stood till now terrified, threw myself at his feet.

"It is I, sir, I! Behold the guilty wretch—the object of your just displeasure. The unhappy creature whom your beneficent hand saved from worse than death has repaid you by the grossest treachery."

"You betrayed my private plans to Francis?" cried Mr Hastings, in a terrible voice.

"Not wilfully, sir. Believe me, I had no idea but to serve you. 'Twas in defending you to Mr Francis that I revealed the unparalleled generosity of your intentions. Drive me from your roof, sir, regard me no more with the eye of benevolence, but don't imagine me sunk so low as to play the traitor to your plans."

"I perceive," said Mrs Hastings, "you haf tried to effect anoder reconciliation."

"Pray, ma'am, explain yourself," says Mr Hastings.

"Mrs Ward is too good a Christian," replied his lady. "She's painfully desirous of de blessing promised to de peacemakers, and her endeavour to reconcile me wid my Lady Impey was crowned wid success. So she goes on to try and make peace between you and Mr Francis."

"I should prefer she minded her own business," said Mr Hastings, but with less of severity in his tone.

"Rise, Mrs Ward, and leafe us," said Mrs Hastings. "Perhaps Mr Hastings will listen to my intercessions."

"No, ma'am," I cried, "I won't—I can't quit this spot till I hear my benefactors say they don't consider me a traitor. Let the punishment I deserve fall on me for my presumption, my criminal softness in being beguiled by Mr Francis,—and I need not say again what would be the heaviest punishment of all,—but let me go forth unstained by that monstrous disgrace!"

"How do you say, my Marian?" asked Mr Hastings. "Is Mis Ward, in your opinion, false or no?"

"I beliefe her true," replied my dear patroness. "If you expel her, Hastings, I'll not dispute your justice, but you'll punish your poor Marian also. She has been punished already dis evening."

"Then most certainly she shan't be punished again. Pray, Mrs Ward, don't distress yourself so sadly. We are only returned to what we were in the General's time, and have no reason to fear so long as Mr Barwell is staunch, and I myself continue in tolerable health. The two junior members may teaze, but they can't impede business. Come, if I see any more of this excessive affliction I shall think you distrust my forgiveness."

I dried my eyes as best I could. My benefactors have pardoned me, but never shall I be able to pardon myself.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MISTAKE.

CALCUTTA, *July ye 1st*, 1778.

During all the months that have elapsed since my last entry I have hardly dared to look into these pages on account of the mortification they caused me. In spite of the delicacy and consideration with which Mr Hastings received my confession, the disappointment he had sustained affected his health and spirits to such a degree that at the entertainment on New Year's Day even Mr Francis observed the change, and proffered hypocritical condolences. Hypocritical I may call them without lack of charity, for when a slight indisposition prevented Mrs Hastings two or three days later from attending the ball and supper given by the Chief-Justice in honour of Mrs Wheler, what does Mr Francis do but go from one to another insinuating that the excuse was a feigned one, and the real desire to inflict annoyance on my Lady Impey? I won't deny that the mortification my patroness received from the public defeat of her efforts for

reforming Mr Hastings' excessive expenditure contributed to her ill-health, but this I will say, that her grudge was not against my Lady Impey, nor did her ladyship believe it.

During these months it has been our portion—I speak of Mr Hastings' family and friends—to behold Mr Francis "in great power, and flourishing like a green bay-tree," in the language of the Scriptures, and this despite the common apprehension of his motives and his absence of power in the Council. His conquest of Mr Wheler, and the assurances which it's freely alleged he has received from the most elevated quarters at home, have filled him with the persuasion that he will very shortly succeed to the post of Governor-General,—the highest situation, as he himself says, within the reach of a British subject. Assisted by this prospect, he plays so skilfully on the ambitions and hopes of that class of persons whose instinct it is to venerate the rising sun, as to attach them to his cause; and by means of letters, writ in the most glowing style, to the Rannies[1] of Burdwan and Rajeshahee and other country powers disaffected to the Government but patronised by him, has inspired them with the same belief. Hence these misguided females obey any order of the Council with the utmost reluctance, trusting that their friend may have attained the summit of power even before the detested task is complete.

Once only have I met Mr Francis face to face since becoming acquainted with the extent of his perfidy, and this was in spite of my most strenuous efforts to avoid him. I won't deny that the man has the most engaging manners when he chuses. For half an hour he talked to me, with hardly an interruption, of his wife and children, his daughters Betsey, Harriet and Sally, Mary and little Kitty, and his only son Philip,—his whole air implying that now at length he had discovered a female to whom compliments were of no value, and who could discover a generous sympathy with the sorrows of a husband and father separated so widely from those dear to him. But all the while that he was talking I was awaiting the revelation of his true aim, and no sooner had he mentioned the name of Mr Hastings than I rose from my seat and dropped him the finest curtsey of

[1] Ranis.

which I was capable, looking him full in the eyes, and so quitted him. 'Twas a poor satisfaction enough, but I had the pleasure to observe that for once he appeared disconcerted.

The sudden accession of this bad man to consequence and everything but power has been peculiarly unfortunate in view of the circumstances of the time, and especially of the affairs of Bombay. Three or four years ago the gentlemen of that Presidency saw fit to adopt the cause of a pretender to the office of Paishwah or Chancellor of the Marattas—who wields an authority equivalent to a king's among that nation—called Ruggobah, and went so far as to undertake warlike operations in his support. Since their power of making war or peace is strictly limited by their dependence upon the Presidency of Bengall, these gentlemen were questionless acting beyond their right; but the Calcutta Council was divided as to the means of correcting them. The Majority, under Mr Francis, which was then in power, would hear of nothing but the instant withdrawal of the Bombay forces from the Maratta territory, while Mr Hastings would have qualified the order with a provision safeguarding British credit by making the retirement gradual. Finding himself as usual out-voted, he was forced to behold Colonel Upton despatched by his opponents to negociate an immediate peace with the Marattas. The treaty, which was signed at a spot styled Poorunder, pleased neither party, since the Marattas found themselves forced to pay heavily for the restoration of the island of Salsette, which had been seized by the British, and the Bombay Committee were pledged to surrender their client Ruggobah, who was to be maintained in a respectable situation in the interior of the Maratta country. The first obstacle to its carrying-out occurred in Ruggobah himself, who declined to be delivered into the hands of the actual Paishwah, his reputed nephew, or rather, of the regents who exercised the government in his name; and this was no cause for surprise, since he knew himself to be accused of murdering his brother, whose son the infant was asserted to be. The Bombay gentlemen refused to surrender him against his will, but neither did they restore Salsette, which even Mr Francis would not hear of giving up, and the treaty fell into

general discredit, observed by neither party, while, to add to the mortification of those responsible for it, the Court of Directors wrote from home approving highly of the alliance with Ruggobah, and desiring that his cause be strongly supported.

In this uncertain state of affairs, the Maratta regents, sensible of the insecurity of their situation, lent a ready ear to the seductions of the French, who have of late made encreased efforts to ingratiate themselves with the country powers to the disadvantage of the British. While making the most flattering representations to Hyder Ally, the Soubah of the Deccan,—a prince who has risen to one of the most respectable powers in Asia from so low an original that his enemies still call him in derision Hyder Naique, or the Corporal,—they did not disdain at the same time to use their arts on the Marattas, with whom he is constantly engaged in hostilities. During last year Mr Hastings received frequently from many quarters intelligence of the favourable reception accorded to the French king's envoy, Mons. le Chevalier de St Lubin, at Poonah, coupled with the report of various indignities inflicted upon our resident there. The chief regent, Nannah Furneess,[1] was prepared to cede the port of Choule, on the Malabar coast, to the French as an arsenal, in return for which favour he was to be supplied with European weapons and ammunition, and the Maratta army instructed by French officers. On the coast itself, Mons. de St Lubin is supported by the presence of a frigate, the *Sartinne*, of the strength and swiftness of which the wildest reports are current, and in the common opinion she is but the earnest of the arrival of a monstrous great fleet under the Count d'Estaing, which was about sailing when Mr Elliot quitted Europe, and was bound, as all believed, for the coast of India, in order to reinforce the Marattas.

Seeing the regions under his protection thus threatened from so many directions, Mr Hastings was endeavouring, at the beginning of this year, to draw up a treaty with the Marattas which should supersede that of Poorunder, and, while assuring them of freedom from molestation, relieve us from anticipation of a French attack from their territory. In this he was sadly

[1] Nana Farnavis.

hampered by the Directors' approbation of Ruggobah, which had become known to the regents, and caused them to regard all his overtures with suspicion; but about the end of January his labours were lightened in the most surprising manner by a letter from Bombay, acquainting him that the two regents had fallen out. Nannah Furneess, who supported the French, had been so unwise as to alienate his colleague, Succaram Bappoo, who was prepared to declare himself an adherent of Ruggobah, and was inviting the Bombay gentlemen to restore him immediately to the Paishwahship. Having regard to the orders of the Directors, thus suddenly rendered possible of fulfilment, Mr Hastings could not hesitate, and, faithfully seconded by Mr Barwell, desired the Committee at Bombay to lose no time in taking advantage of this happy event. At the same moment he apprised them of the despatch of ten lacks of rupees, for the expenses of the war, and also of a considerable force, drawn from the Bengall army, which was to march across the entire breadth of India and bring them active assistance. In spite of the contentious behaviour of Mr Francis and Mr Wheler, orders were duly issued in February for the assembling of this force at Calpy,[1] and for its start at the earliest possible moment.

Had Mr Hastings been accorded even a moderate measure of cheerful support by those to whose hands he was forced to commit the direction of the entire enterprise, the most gratifying success could not fail to have resulted; but never was a ruler so ill served. The revolution has been duly accomplished, but hitherto the Bombay gentlemen, in spite of their eager letters and their parade of anxiety for their friend Ruggobah, have failed to take a single active step in his support. Miraba Furneess, the successor of Nannah in the regency, has succeeded also to his politics, and while feigning to dismiss Mr St Lubin, has renewed the engagements made with him. Nannah Furneess himself has also obtained his readmission to the city of Poonah in an inferior character, which there can be little doubt he will shortly contrive to exchange for a situation equal or superior to that he formerly held, thanks to the supineness of his opponent. Again, the force from Calpy, though a start was

[1] Kalpi on the Jumna, not that below Calcutta.

at length effected two months after its assembling, has the misfortune to be commanded by Colonel Leslie, an officer formerly of the most strenuous disposition, but now afflicted alike with the bodily weaknesses and the mental infirmities of age. Despite his urgent orders to press forward and wait for nothing, he is now delaying in Boondelcund, meddling in the affairs of the country powers, while Mr Francis publishes among his friends, and has even read aloud in the Council, private letters—the writer of which he refuses to name—declaring that the force is decimated by disease and sunstroke, and should be at once recalled if any of its members are to see Bengall again. Only lately a new weapon has come to the hand of Mr Francis in the appalling intelligence from America of General Burgoyne's surrender with his entire army to the rebels; and he amuses himself by drawing parallels between the two cases, declaring that Mr Hastings is preparing a second Saratoga for Colonel Leslie's force. At the same time, so inconsistent is hatred, that he goes about asserting that he is the only person in Calcutta to whom this American disaster is a cause of grief, and that Mr Hastings welcomes it as a blow to my Lord North. 'Tis the first time he has ever admitted that the Governor-General may possess a grievance against Administration!

July ye 9th.

This morning the past, which I have endeavoured to forget, was recalled to my memory in a manner sufficiently singular. Proceeding early to one of the Europe shops in the Bazaar for some lace desired by Mrs Hastings, I was about entering my palanqueen again, when I became aware of a person attending me and bowing very low. The extravagant excess of powder on his hair showed me he was not a European, but did not in the slightest prepare me to behold the visage of my cousin Alexander when the stranger advanced to assist me into the palanqueen. The afflicting memories of my escape from Buxerautgunge returned upon me with such vividness that I an't ashamed to record that I cast a glance at the bearers and servants who had accompanied me, to assure myself they were at hand should defence be needed,—as though the most monstrous desperado in the world would have attempted to carry me off from the

midst of Calcutta in broad daylight, and from the Governor-General's own dependants.

"I hadn't expected to see you in Calcutta, sir," I said.

"I am here to appeal to Mr Hastings," replied my cousin. "His emissaries have been leading us a dog's life, restricting our movements and harassing our trade until it's absolutely intolerable. It's said he's affable and easy of approach to those who feel themselves injured, so I'm resolved to wait upon him."

"You'll scarce be likely to find him at liberty," said I. "A courier arrived from Bussorah two days ago with overland despatches of so much moment that a Council was at once summoned to consider them, and is again sitting to-day."

"But even the Governor-General requires sustenance," said Mr Haines; "and if I should chance to be waiting upon my amiable cousin at the hour when the Council broke up, she might make interest with him to grant me an interview."

This impudent attempt to ignore the entire events of the past served to rouse me at once to indignation and boldness. "Mr Haines," I said, looking my cousin in the face, "you appear to have forgot the circumstances in which I quitted your roof, but I have not. Deeply as I regret to speak with such severity to a son of my revered uncle, it's necessary for me to tell you that we meet upon a footing merely of civility. More I don't desire."

"Ah," says my cousin, fetching a prodigious great sigh, "I feared as much. The unhappily disturbed state of your intellects when you escaped from my mother's protection was bound to leave a trace in unreasoning resentment such as this."

"Whatever you may have induced Mr Hastings to believe, sir, my intellects were as sound as your own. You meditated a cruel blow to a helpless widow who had confided in your honour, and she don't intend to offer you an opportunity to repeat it. You may like to hear that I have been repeatedly recommended to disavow the deed you induced me to sign, on the ground that I was under age at the time, but a pious care for the reputation of my relatives has hitherto restrained me. Still, if they attempt to presume upon my forbearance——"

"Threats are unnecessary, ma'am," he replied, "and I regret to see you condescend to make use of 'em. You needn't fear that my sister or I will presume upon your acquaintance in the future."

He bowed again and made his exit, his countenance wearing the same morose expression to which I was once so well accustomed, and I returned home, a little disturbed by this disagreeable encounter. I had intended to consult my patroness whether I had acted prudently in thus declining my cousin's overtures, but before I had time to do more than exhibit for her inspection the lace I had brought back with me, Mr Hastings entered her apartment, the Council being risen.

"Mr Hastings appears disturbed," said his lady. "I trust dere's nothing more dan usually wrong?"

"Is my Marian's accustomed perspicacity deserting her?" inquired Mr Hastings, "or why don't she perceive that it's no disagreeable cause, though awfully momentous, that moves her Hastings? Yes, my dearest, the intelligence so long expected is at length arrived. War was declared against France on the 18th of March, near four months ago."

"And you haf summoned de Council to put in practice de plans you haf so long concerted, sir?"

"Precisely, ma'am—Messieurs Francis and Wheler obstructing the business in their usual style. We have given orders for the increase of our army, the assembling of three months' supplies in Fort William, and the completion of the defensive works at Budge Budgia. Captain Price is to man our two best ships, the *Resolution* and his own vessel the *Royal Charlotte*, arm them with forty guns apiece, and reinforce Sir Edward Vernon's squadron down the coast. We have ordered the Fort St George gentlemen to cultivate Hyder Ally, who is seeking our alliance, and to attack Pondicherry, and we are setting them an example by seizing the French settlements in Bengall."

"But," cried Mrs Hastings, "not Chandernagore?"

"Why not, ma'am? Would you have us leave it unmolested?"

"But Mons. and Mad. Chevalier are our friends, our intimates!"

"Is my Marian requesting her Hastings to postpone public duty to private affection? Rest assured, my dear, that had Mr Chevalier been so fortunate as to receive his Bussorah despatches before us, we had been prisoners now."

"Den dey are not efen aware dere's war? You will surprise dem, seize dem by treachery?"

"My dearest Marian, there's no question of treachery. We shall appear before Chandernagore in overwhelming force, and call upon Mr Chevalier to surrender. The worst he and his family will suffer is a brief sojourn here, which my Marian will do her utmost to alleviate, before being despatched to Europe in a neutral ship. All prisoners of war are at my disposal by an old regulation, and you may rely upon me not to err in the direction of harshness towards your friends."

"But it is cruel, unjust!" cried Mrs Hastings. "De amiable creatures wid whom we haf so often visited and enjoyed ourselfs! You will permit de Chevalier family to escape, Hastings, for your poor Marian's sake?"

"Not even for my Marian's! Consider, my beloved, Chevalier loses no honour by finding himself surprised and forced into surrender. But put it that he received warning and evaded us, as you suggest. He would leave in command Mr Hocquart, who must make some show of defence if he knew the place was to be attacked, though conscious defence was hopeless, or be eternally disgraced. Then blood must be shed. Allow your husband to carry out his plans without reproaching him, Marian. They are not to be altered."

Mr Hastings quitted the room, and his lady, forgetting the lace displayed upon the table, began to walk backwards and forwards between the two opposite doors, her whole appearance indicating an excessive disturbance of mind.

"How can dey but think we might haf warned dem?" she cried. "Sure we're poor friends to 'em. And de Council will prevent deir being set at liberty, I'll swear. Dey'll question Mr Hastings' right, and raise a cry against him in de settlement. Is dere nothing can be done? Oh dat I could effect anything alone! Stay! Hester, did you observe anything strange in Mr Hastings' air just now?"

"Why, no, ma'am," I answered her. "He appeared grieved on account of your grief, but I did not remark anything more."

"Ah, but I did!" she cried. "He meant me to understand I might do vat he could not. He could not postpone public duty to private friendship. But I haf no public duty: I must act in his place."

"Oh, dearest madam!" I cried, much disturbed, "you won't —you can't mean to reveal the secret Mr Hastings has confided to you? Believe me, he had no such design as you imagine."

"And pray, Mrs Ward," she demanded of me, "who is better able to apprehend Mr Hastings' meaning—you or his own wife? You will haf de goodness to reserve your reading of his character until it's desired. Will you prescribe to me my duty to my husband?"

"Oh no, dear ma'am, I would not presume so far," I assured her. "But won't my kind Mrs Hastings permit a mild remonstrance from the humble dependant she has used as a friend?"

"Wid all my heart, provided she cease when de remonstrance is offered. But now, how to effect dis warning? Dere will be no boat going up to Chandernagore as soon as it's known in Calcutta dat war is declared, and 'twould not be expedient to despatch a special messenger. Nothing must connect Mr Hastings' family wid de intelligence. Ah, your relatives live not far from Chandernagore, an't it so?"

"Yes, ma'am, but they an't now at home," I cried, all in a flutter. "I saw my cousin Mr Haines in the town this morning."

"De very man!" she cried. "He will carry de message—a simple billet from me to Mad. Chevalier. Who could suspect treason in a chitt from one female to anoder, sent by de hands of a passing gentleman?"

"Oh, pray, ma'am," I entreated her, "let me beseech you not to put yourself in my cousin's power. He bears a grudge against Mr Hastings, and he also has French connections. Pray don't trust him."

"I haf no intention of trusting him. My billet will be such as only Mad. Chevalier will understand. But I can't allow your prejudice against your relatives, which should be dispelled

by a little strength of mind, to rob me of dis opportunity. Be so good as to call Sukey."

The black woman making her appearance, Mrs Hastings desired her to summon one of the *harcarras*[1] always in waiting in the vicinity of the Governor-General, and this man was in his turn despatched to search Calcutta for Mr Alexander Haines. Seeing my patroness so resolved, I durst not offer any further protest, but when Mrs Hastings seated herself at her scrutoire I ventured once more to approach her.

"Dear madam," I besought her, "at least suffer me to indite the chitt for you, and sign it in my own name. Then, if the worst happens, it can only be attributed to a treacherous dependant, and not to any failure of duty on the part of Mr Hastings."

"If you provoke me much more, Mrs Ward, you will irritate me extremely. De wife of Mr Hastings don't need to take shelter behind her dependants."

I could say no more; and my patroness indited and folded her billet, signing it "M. Hastings" with a fresh glance of displeasure at me, and, without desiring me to wait upon her, passed into another apartment, where Sukey informed her that Hainiss Saub was in attendance. When she returned, she addressed me with an air that showed she was resolved to forget my doubts of the wisdom of her action.

"Mr Haines will hand de chitt to two gentlemen in de Service who were detained at his house dis morning by an accident to deir boat. You may make your mind easy. Dere can be no suspicion of any communication having passed between dis place and Ghyretty House. De gentlemen will not speak, nor your cousin, and dere will be no blacks involved in de matter. Pray wear a more cheerful countenance, Mrs Ward: your melancholy visage displeases me."

July ye 11th.

This unhappy business has fallen out as ill as I feared it would. After Council to-day Mr Hastings entered his lady's apartment with a vain endeavour to banish the gloom that op-

[1] *Harkara* is really a spy, but appears to have been chiefly used as the equivalent of *chuprasi*.

pressed his countenance, which even the affectionate solicitudes of Mrs Hastings availed not to dispel.

"You have the misfortune, my Marian," he said, "to be married to the most criminal wretch on the face of the earth. The only public disaster of which my enemies have so far scrupled to accuse me is the American revolt, and I am hourly expecting to have that omission rectified by overland pacquet."

"But what new trouble is dere?" cried Mrs Hastings.

"Why, just this, my dear. Mr Chevalier has effected his escape, and Francis alleges that I connived at it."

"Den dey are all safe!" with a sigh of relief.

"Precisely, but not exactly in my Marian's signification of the term. Mr Chevalier has more confidence in our humanity than she displayed when she lamented their prospective fate t'other day. He abandons his lady and children to our care, while he goes off to stir up the Marattas against us."

"He has left dem behind!"

"Absolutely. When it was decided the place should be seized, Colonel Dow, who had the matter in hand, crossed the river above and below the town early yesterday morning, quite unsuspected. Understanding the supreme importance of securing the person of Mr Chevalier, he had surrounded the garden-house at Ghyretty with hircarras the night before, so that nobody could leave it unobserved. In the morning he advanced with his Seapoys, and summoned Mr Chevalier to surrender. The answer returned was that the gentleman was dressing himself, but would wait upon the Colonel immediately. When he still failed to appear, Dow was about to search the house, but Mrs Chevalier, with the most anxious air in the world, entreated him not to alarm her children, who were sick, and she would desire her spouse to bestir himself. Grown impatient at last, the Colonel forced his way into the bedchamber and discovered the evasion. Chevalier must have received warning the night before, and have set off down the river barely an hour before Dow posted his spies round the house."

"But is it certain he was warned from here? Why should dey say you did it?" asked Mrs Hastings in a faultering voice.

"Francis has received information that Mr Chevalier was

visited before supper by two of the Company's servants, and he declares that to his certain knowledge they brought him a warning—from me, so he alleges."

"And you—what said you, Hastings?"

"I contradicted him, my dear; but civilly, I trust, and with such a consciousness of rectitude as staggered even the slanderer. I reminded him that my entire credit hung on Chevalier's capture, so that he should not join the Marattas to instruct them in carrying out St Lubin's schemes; and I assured him that were the traitor the most confidential member of my own family—were he Elliot himself—he should receive the most exemplary chastisement."

"But if it was your wife, Hastings—your most unhappy wife?" cried Mrs Hastings in a kind of frenzy.

"But that's impossible. My Marian would never so far forget her duty to her husband as to assist his country's enemies."

"She has, she did! Alas, will Hastings turn away in anger from his poor Marian?"

"Marian," cried Mr Hastings in extreme agitation, "assure me that this is untrue—a jest, or that you are shielding some other person."

"Alas! alas! it's too true. I sent a billet of warning to Mad. Chevalier. And I haf destroyed you!"

"You little know the calamity you have brought upon me, Marian. If Chevalier succeeds in reaching Poonah the entire power of the Marattas will be hurled upon each of our settlements in detail, guided by a man versed in the military affairs of Europe. To ensure our more complete destruction he'll unite them with Hyder against us. Heavens! the prospect makes the mind reel. And it is your doing—yours!"

"Can nothing be done? I will gif my jewels——"

"Had you the wealth of Asia at command it could not avail. Oh, Marian, from Francis and his confederates I expect unkindness, I anticipate treachery, but from you—you to whom I have spoke without reserve, confiding in that discretion I believed to distinguish you above all other females! Is there nobody I can trust?"

"Hastings, you break my heart!" Mrs Hastings was sobbing

at his feet with such an excess of anguish that I ventured to approach, but Mr Hastings motioned me back, and, raising his lady, enfolded her in his arms.

"My Marian, have I spoken harshly? Pardon the bitterness of disappointment. Thank Heaven, whatever happens, I possess you still!"

"Dey shall not attribute it to you, Hastings. I will confess it. I will throw myself on de mercy of Mr Francis."

"Never, my Marian—never! Trust a tyger, trust a *covery*,[1] trust a Banyan, but never trust Philip Francis. I am convinced the exact method of the warning is fortunately hid from him thus far, unless—— Is it possible he can have obtained possession of your chitt?"

"Dat could help him little, for 'twas wrote in German, which nobody in de Presidency can read but Mad. Chevalier and I. Besides, I gave her no plain warning, but wrote in such terms as she alone would understand."

"Why, this is better than I had feared," says Mr Hastings; "but there must have been treachery on the part of your hircarra, and Francis will reap the advantage of it. In spite of my denial, and the remonstrances of the other gentlemen, he won't permit the matter to drop. And when he raises it again I must withdraw the denial, and confess that the warning came from me."

"But 'twas I sent it!" cried Mrs Hastings.

"And is not my Marian myself? Ah, my dearest, Mr Francis will perceive the truth fast enough. He has a weapon to his hand in an old regulation, long fallen into disuse but never revoked, forbidding the Company's servants, on pain of deprivation of their offices, to marry with foreigners. There at last is the instrument by which he may turn me out of the situation he has so long desired to occupy. And that's only the least of the mischief."

"And it must come? Dere's no averting it?"

"Why, yes, my dear. Pray Heaven that Mr Chevalier may fall into the hands of some of our agents or allies before he can approach Poonah. Then the harm will be undone."

[1] Cobra.

CHAPTER IX.

A DISASTER.

CALCUTTA, *July ye 29th*, 1778.

We are still dwelling, as Mr Hastings phrases it, beneath the suspended sword, unable to feel ourselves secure. Of Mr Chevalier and his companion Mr Law nothing has been heard, and the agents at the subordinate factories aver stoutly that he has not passed by them. The Governor-General maintains his equanimity to an extraordinary degree, and while daily anticipating the very worst consequences from Mr Francis' enmity, has never, since the first discovery, addressed so much as a solitary word of reproach to his lady, whose depressed aspect and anxious penitence would indeed melt the hardest heart. If possible, Mr Hastings betrays towards her a solicitude even more assiduous than usual, for we are now in the height of the deadly season, and the countless dangers to which Europeans here are exposed have just been exemplified by the death of the unfortunate Mrs Wheler, who landed, a bride and a beauty, only seven months ago. Could anything have availed to comfort the distracted husband, it had questionless been the sincere respect and sympathy accorded by the entire community, and evidenced at the funeral, when the pall was borne by the Governor-General, Mr Francis, Mr Barwell, two of the Judges, and a high military officer, as far as the gate of the burying-ground, where their places were taken by the six ladies of highest rank in the settlement, who carried the remains to the grave.[1] Knowing the unfortunate Mrs Wheler's awfully sudden end,—which has in it nothing surprising to those acquainted with this place,—I wonder the less at the apprehensive affection, if I may so term it, with which Mr Hastings, Mr Fraser, and the other married gentlemen watch over the health of their wives. There is something excessively solemnising in contemplating a relation so tender sustained, as it were, on the

[1] These were the arrangements at the funeral of Lady Ann Monson.

verge of the tomb, and liable at any moment to an eternal interruption.

Another loss which our community has lately suffered, though happily not by death, is that of Mr Elliot, who has been despatched by Mr Hastings on a mission of the most supreme importance. The engaging qualities of this young gentleman, his entire devotion to his patron's interests, and the manner in which, with a shrewdness beyond his years, he contrives to persuade all but the most inhumanly suspicious of the integrity of his intentions, render his services of the highest value. It's less than a fortnight since he was among us here, alleviating our depression of spirits with his agreeable witticisms, and now he is on his way to Naugpoor, in the centre of Indostan, charged with the prosecution of a scheme than which even Mr Hastings can rarely have conceived a bolder. Shortly after the capture of Chandernagore I became aware that there was some important business going forward. While Mr Elliot was ready to entertain us perpetually with his droll relation of the affairs of Chandernagore, where the French inhabitants appeared to take it prodigious hard that their liberty should be in the slightest degree abridged owing to their surrender, he was frequently in serious conference with Mr Hastings. From depicting for us in a ludicrous light the exactions of Mr Hocquart, the deputy-commandant, he would depart post to open negociations with Mr Francis or Mr Wheler, on whom not even his transparent sincerity can make a mark. They regard him as sent to deceive them, Mr Francis even insulting him among his acquaintances with the term "greasy," and suspect Mr Hastings of the worst designs, though what personal advantage they expect to accrue to him from this new scheme I can't say. Briefly spoken, it is that the Governor-General, tired alike of the feebleness of the Bombay Committee and the inefficiency of their client Ruggobah, has it in his mind to encourage another claimant to the sovereignty of the Marattas, and this not a mere *Paishwah*, but an actual king. Moodajee Bounceloe,[1] the ruler of Berar—a territory extending from Bengall almost to Poonah—is declared by many of the Indians to be the legal heir of the lately

[1] Bhonsla.

deceased Maratta sovereign, who died a prisoner at Sittara; and Mr Hastings has conceived the idea not only to free that nation from the tyranny of the rival Paishwahs, but to erect the Maratta kingdom into a stable barrier against the encroachments of the French by establishing at Poonah a monarch who must ever consider himself infinitely obliged to us. The ostensible object of Mr Elliot's mission is to obtain from Moodajee Bounceloe permission for Colonel Leslie's procrastinating force to pass through his territories; but if he finds the prince well affected towards the British, he is to broach the scheme with due caution, and mark his reception of it. The most flattering communications have already passed between Mr Hastings and the Raja through the Vackeel or agent whom the latter maintains in Calcutta, and the Governor-General has little doubt of clinching the business through the intermediary of so zealous and single-minded a servant as Mr Elliot.

August ye 14th.

By an astonishing train of events, reflecting the utmost credit upon all concerned in them, our minds have been relieved, and the affairs of the state placed in a more stable condition. So late as last night we had not even an intimation of the approaching good fortune, and 'twas with the most anxious forebodings that Mrs Hastings changed her dress for supper, to which her spouse had invited several gentlemen, among them being Mr Francis.

"I shrink from dat man as from a serpent, Hester!" she said to me. "I can never feel confident he has not dat in his pocket which will destroy Mr Hastings, and all through me."

Mr Hastings, on the other hand, gave no appearance of anxiety, affecting, as he had done from the first, to treat the matter of Mr Chevalier's escape as closed by his denying any knowledge of it, and since Mr Francis was pleased to wear his most agreeable air, there was no breach in the cordiality of the moment. . The heat and moisture of the evening was excessive, as always at this season, but the atmosphere was rendered endurable, and even grateful, by the labours of the boys armed with large fans of peacocks' feathers, two of whom stand behind each person's chair. As this was the first occasion on which

I have so far relaxed my mourning as to comply with my patroness's frequent desire that I should occupy a seat at table in so formal a party, I discovered a considerable interest in observing those present. Opposite me sat my charming Miss Touchet, distinguished as much by the unobtrusive delicacy of her behaviour as by the attention she received from all the gentlemen; but besides Mrs Hastings and myself, there was no other female at table, Lady Impey being indisposed.

Towards the close of the meal I remarked Miss Touchet, who was seated next to Mr Hastings, looking very intently at the windows opposite her, which were all thrown wide open for the sake of coolness.

"You'll think me sadly fanciful, sir," she said, "but I could have sworn I saw two European gentlemen pass just now, with their cloaks wrapped about their faces."

"Miss Touchet's word will suffice us; her oath an't needed," replied Mr Hastings. "But pray, ma'am, what is there alarming in the appearance of two friends more to join our party?"

"Why, really, sir, I hardly dare tell you. Such an idea struck me—the oddest, the most absurd—sure you'll all die of laughing! I thought I recognised one of the gentlemen in spite of his disguise, and he was——"

"*Shevalyur Saub hye!*" said a servant at the door of the apartment, and the whole company rose up in disorder, peering into the dimness, which was but slightly illuminated by the wax candles burning in glass shades upon the table.

"Mr Chevalier—is it possible?" cried Mr Hastings, and as he spoke Mrs Hastings quitted her place between Sir Elijah and Mr Francis and joined him at his end of the table. The French agent advanced bowing, and held out the hilt of his sword.

"It is I, indeed, sir," he replied. "I come to surrender myself your prisoner, driven by no force but honour. Permit me to felicitate you upon the possession of such a follower as Mr Elliot—the youthful, the incomparable Elliot. Will it be believed that the young gentleman, in the course of the mission on which you, sir, had despatched him, heard of Mons. Law and myself in the vicinity of Cuttack, and, regardless of the unhealthiness of the season and his own sickness, pursued us

with the utmost resolution, finally swimming the river lest we should escape him? Having obtained the support of the Niab, he declared us his prisoners, but found himself confronted with a difficulty. He could not well conduct us with him on his journey into Berar; he had no force to send back with us to Calcutta. I perceived his dilemma; I compassionated, I admired him. The solution was found; I gave my word of honour to repair immediately to Calcutta unescorted, and to surrender myself to you. I do not regret the generous impulse; I am not ashamed of it. Ascribe it, sir, to the admiration with which that estimable young man has inspired me. And having given my word, behold me here to redeem it!"

"Sir," said Mr Hastings, "I know not which possession to be more proud of—such a servant, or such a friend. Oblige me by retaining your sword, and do Mrs Hastings the favour of taking a seat at her table."

"Mr Chevalier will pardon me the question," says Mr Francis, "but was it altogether kind in the *friend* of Mr Hastings to sacrifice the advantage procured him by that friendship?"

"By returning to Calcutta, sir?" said Mr Chevalier. "'Twas to honour I sacrificed the advantage affection had secured me."

"The affection of Mr Hastings for his friends is well known."

"Mr Hastings, sir? Sure in the presence of these ladies it's unnecessary for me to recall the fact that I owed my evasion to female courage and fidelity?"

I thought Mrs Hastings was about to faint, and I saw her spouse lay his hand upon her arm in a caressing yet commanding style. Mr Francis, a gratified malignity in his voice, pursued his advantage.

"Sure Mr Chevalier is happy in his female friends!"

"He is, sir," returned Mr Chevalier, bowing to us in turn, "and especially in the possession of a wife who, he makes bold to say, is inferior to none of them."

"Great as are the merits of Mrs Chevalier, they don't enter into the present discussion, sir, I believe?" said Mr Francis.

"How, sir?" cried Mr Chevalier. "Is it possible you haven't heard of my wife's holding Colonel Dow in talk to give me time to make my escape? Or can it be that the respectable Mr

Dow has concealed the fact as unworthy of his reputation for shrewdness?"

"It was understood that Mr Chevalier was escaped the night before."

"Then it must be Mad. Chevalier's shrewdness of which you think meanly, sir. Why should she waste time in securing my retreat when I was twelve hours gone?"

"I don't pretend to read the lady's mind, sir. It's asserted on credible evidence that you was visited and warned the night before by two of the Company's servants."

"I had the pleasure of the gentlemen's company to supper, sir, but no word of warning from them, I'll assure you."

"Then perhaps it an't true that Mrs Chevalier received through them a billet from a lady who is now in the company?"

"To be sure she did, sir, enclosing an embroidery pattern."

"Pray, will you give me your assurance that the billet did not enclose a warning as well, sir?"

"What, does Mr Francis aspire to supervise his lady's correspondence with her female friends? If so, I can't be surprised that the peace of his family is best consulted by the expatriation of its head."

"Stay," said Mr Hastings, before Mr Francis could speak, "pardon me if I interrupt you, gentlemen. If my own character an't sufficient to protect my guest from these ill-natured hints, the infinite pains taken by my servant to secure him must supply the need. This unbecoming interrogatory must proceed no further, but if Mr Francis desire to frame a definite accusation, such as may justify his odd remarks, he's at liberty to do it. My dear, shall we return to the table?"

I can't describe the sentiments of delight with which I contemplated the scowl of baffled rage on Mr Francis' countenance. It was plain that he recognised how unsatisfactory a witness my cousin would prove, did he produce him, when confronted with the coolness of Mr Chevalier and the heroic behaviour of Mr Elliot,—and he has no other reliance. That he will go on propagating his slanders I don't doubt, but he can scarce inflame the public mind on the subject.

(Through the medium of his tool, Mr Macintosh, he repeated his calumny against Mr Hastings five years later, in the hope of prejudicing him in the eyes of the British nation.—*Note added in* 1818.)

August ye 16th.

The cheerful frame in which I closed my last entry is already obscured, if only in part, by an event of the most unexpected and inconvenient nature. By advices received yesterday from Bombay it becomes clear that the dilatory behaviour of the Select Committee there has reaped its merited reward in a second revolution in the Poonah administration. The dispossessed Nannah Furneess, while affecting to endure his displacement with philosophy, after secretly conspiring to regain the power he had lost, has succeeded, by provoking a sudden contention, in relegating his rival Miraba to the private situation he himself admired so little. This in itself was only what Mr Hastings and everybody here had anticipated; but Miraba, now burning with that affection for Ruggobah and the British which he dissembled so conveniently when in possession of power, makes his way to Bombay, armed with offers of help from the other chiefs of the State, who see themselves overshadowed by the victorious Nannah, and proposes an immediate restoration of the exiled prince. The Bombay gentlemen welcome the opportunity, resolving only to defer their action until next month, when they expect to receive authorisation from Calcutta. This ill-timed activity is cruelly disconcerting to Mr Hastings, who sees his far-reaching plans with regard to Moodajee Bounceloe thrown into irretrievable disorder, but the positive commands of the Court of Directors afford him no liberty of action. The sole step in his power is to send the authorisation desired by the Bombay Committee through the hands of Mr Elliot, that he may shape his conduct according to the new direction of affairs; and to-day, by means of express *pattymores*[1] or despatch-boats, he is sending out hircarras, whose orders are to follow post upon the young gentleman's heels even as far as Naugpoor. Mr Hastings has little faith in the Bombay gentlemen's persistence, and trusts that they may even yet tire of their client; but

[1] Patamars.

Mr Elliot has to be warned not to allude, unless in the most intimate and confidential style, to the Berar Raja's claims to the inheritance of Seevajee, though these were to have been his principal weapon in assailing him.

Sept. ye 15th.

The hopes and the precautions of the Governor-General are alike proved vain by a blow the most cruel that could have fallen upon him in his public character. Returning from Council to-day, there was audible in his voice, even as he entered the house, so deep a melancholy that Mrs Hastings and I regarded one another with apprehension. But our alarm may be imagined when Mr Hastings, on appearing in his lady's apartment, forgot the polite greeting which I had never yet known him omit, and threw himself into a chair, a groan which he could not suppress bursting from him. Mrs Hastings flew to his side.

"Hastings, you are indisposed—ill!" she cried. "What ails my dearest? Don't torture your poor Marian by dis silence. Hester, send a hircarra to Dr Campbell at once. Bid him not lose a moment!"

"I am not ill, but grieved to the heart," said Mr Hastings, rousing himself, and restraining me by a motion of his hand. "Alas, my Marian, I have lost my poor Elliot!"

"Lost! Not dead?" we both cried in the same moment.

"Dead," repeated Mr Hastings, "on his way to Naugpoor. With a frame already dangerously weakened by the unhealthy season and the hardships of the journey, the generous youth, recognising the importance of effecting the arrest of Mr Chevalier, did not scruple to risk his life by swimming a flooded river when the exertion was in the highest degree perilous to him. Having despatched his prisoners hither, he prepared to continue his expedition with infinite spirit, but his enfeebled constitution refused to endure the fresh trials to which he desired to subject it. He is no more, and the loss to me is irreparable."

Mrs Hastings and I were both weeping, as much for the gallant young gentleman himself as for his bereaved patron, and Mr Hastings surveyed us with a gaze that appeared to be one of envy.

"Would that I also could find the relief of tears!" he cried. "Then I might drown my sense of the public loss in picturing the grief of his venerable father, my faithful friend and supporter, of his lovely sister, of his promising brother, when they learn that their Alick is no more. But even their affliction fails to move me in comparison with my own loss and that of the State, for I solemnly believe that the future of the British dominion in India lay in Elliot's hands, and I have nobody to take his place."

We suppressed our sobs, perceiving for the first time the true magnitude of the disaster, and Mr Hastings continued to speak—

"Sure I must be either the most undeserving or the least fortunate of men!" he said. "Others have a choice of instruments on whom to rely, a host of subordinate but worthy persons capable of carrying to a successful issue the duties delegated to them. Questionless the fault is mine. I indulge in excessive expectations with regard to my inferiors and instruments. Francis was justified when he taunted me with my likeness to Robinson Crusoe, building a monstrous great boat forty yards inland, with no means of getting it into the water. Be it so. It's my misfortune to look rather to the general end than to the particular means of attaining it, and my instruments are each of them endued with a will and a character of their own, so that at any moment my dispositions may be thrown out by their independent action. Francis and Wheler are here to watch for my stumbling, their creatures throughout the Presidency are eager to obey me in the most perfunctory manner imaginable, with an eye to currying favour with them in the future. The gentlemen at Madrass and Bombay, absorbed in their internal quarrels and private ambitions, would rather thwart me even than advantage themselves. If I possess friends and followers on whom I can rely, I am forbid to employ them. Hancock dies in penury, Stewart and Middleton are deprived of their offices. My course lies in the selection of dull mediocrity, for to serve the Governor-General intelligently marks a man for persecution. Selection, do I say? My instruments are forced upon me. Leslie, whose seniority must not be passed over, disobeys my orders, lingers months in idleness in the vicinity of

the diamond-mines, while young and active officers under him are burning with zeal to press on. I am hampered on every hand; and if I could prevail upon the Council to countenance my going to Naugpoor in Elliot's place, they would only allow it in the hope that I might die like him."

"You go to Naugpoor? Never!" cried Mrs Hastings. "If all de Council pressed you to go, Hastings, it should only be over your Marian's dead body. But why dis excessive disorder? Was Elliot's mission, den, of such extreme moment?"

"Not less important than delicate. Consider, Marian; the poor youth's ostensible business was to obtain Moodajee's permission for Leslie's force to cross the Nerbudda and pass through his territory in its way to Bombay. That's a weighty matter enough; for if the force linger much longer in Boondelcund 'twill make us the laughing-stock of Asia and the execration of Indostan. But what's even that in comparison with the question of the Maratta paramountcy? Despite the excessive care with which I have veiled my intentions, Moodajee's Vackeel, Beneram Pundit, has questionless informed him of them, and what will be his sentiments when he sees the Bombay Committee take up afresh the cause of Ruggobah? It will be a miracle if he don't conceive we are playing him false. I relied on Elliot to compose his fears, soothe his suspicions, reassure his mind, as no other person on earth could do it. I have nobody like him, at once faithful and enterprising. The good honest fellows stick to the letter of their instructions, and the largest liberty accorded them can't stimulate them to stir one step on their own responsibility; and the clever bustling rogues—— what! have I not seen sufficient of their crooked ways, and the ingenuity with which they twist the most detailed instructions to their own profit? I have no one to send to take up the negociations. They must lapse, and Moodajee pass from a probable, if hesitating, friend into a certain enemy. We are encompassed with 'em already,—Hyder, the Nizam, the Marattas, and now Berar as well. Sure the British power is doomed, and I can do nothing to redeem it!"

"Rouse yourself, Hastings!" cried his lady. "Where is your courage? Dis I know, dat if you can't maintain de British

power in India, dere's nobody can. What! will you see it sink into de melancholy situation it occupies in America, because de man entrusted with authority has given way to despair?"

"Alas! my Marian, your husband has little cause for anything but despair. Slighted at home and opposed here, foreseeing further evils which he can't prevent, bereft of his worthiest instrument, what can he do?"

"He can place his confidence in Heaven, and go forward boldly. Alas! Hastings, must I remind you, when you lament so feelingly de poor Elliot's death, dat it is to your Marian you owe it? But for my warning to Mad. Chevalier, he need not have perilled his life to arrest her husband, and might now be safe in Naugpoor."

"What a callous wretch am I, to have planted this thorn in the bosom of the being to whom I am so infinitely obliged!" cried Mr Hastings. "Yes, my Marian, your husband will cease these unmanly repinings, and apply himself afresh to the task committed to him by his Sovereign and his respectable employers. Despair can never touch him while his Marian is left to him, though every other support fail. Though he can't repair the loss of Elliot, yet he can face its grievous results with boldness."

"Now I recognise my husband again!" said Mrs Hastings.

"For my private secretary," he continued with reviving cheerfulness, "I will steal young Markham from Wheler, who will be complimented by my taking the youth from his family, as I took my poor Elliot from Sir Elijah's; and 'twill please his father the Archbishop as well, who is my constant friend. Markham knows no Persian as yet, but I have had my eye a long while on a capable fellow for Persian interpreter. Pray, Mrs Ward, will you do me the favour to tame a wild man of the woods?"

"Oh, sir, anything you please—but you alarm me!" I cried, wondering whether Mr Hastings had it in his mind to bring to Calcutta one of those strange creatures of which the country captains[1] have told me in the Eastern Islands, which some declare to be apes and others actual human beings, though awfully degraded.

[1] Country ships sailed from port to port in the Eastern seas, and not to and from England.

"Our kind Mrs Ward fears being burdened with the tuition of an *ourang-outan*," says Mr Hastings. "Don't be alarmed, ma'am: the person of whom I speak is a young gentleman in the Artillery, of whom I have taken notice as a man of considerable parts. Unfortunately, he has served so long in the remote stations up-country that he's contracted the most invincible shyness and distaste for human society. I heard of him last at Bankypore, where, paying his respects to the Commandant's lady, he had the misfortune to seat himself upon her lap-dog, which occupied a chair beside her, and having perceived his crime, fled from her presence with so much precipitation that he forgot his hat, and ran through the cantonments bare-headed."

"And pray, dear sir, what am I to do for this unfortunate gentleman?" I asked him.

"Whatever your own good heart prompts you, ma'am. If he takes long to discover that the female sex is to be adored instead of dreaded, I shall be surprised."

"It appears to me you're plotting to rob me of Mrs Ward's assistance in my domestic affairs," says Mrs Hastings.

"I have more confidence in Mrs Ward's discretion, my Marian. 'Twill do the young gentleman no harm to offer his vows at the shrine where so many have sighed, and she won't grudge him that liberal education. Why, at your request she would marry Francis himself, and tell you all his secrets!"

"La, Mr Hastings! how can you speak so, when Mr Francis is married already?" cried his lady.

"If Mr Francis remembered it better himself 'twould be less easy for other persons to forget. Here I have had Barwell and Sanderson both assailing me with complaints because Mr Francis persisted in handing Mrs Grand to her palanqueen before Mrs Barwell after the Birthday supper. The indiscretion seems to have created a monstrous stir among the ladies, though the death of poor Mrs Wheler quieted 'em for a while; but I told Sanderson it was out of my power to make a public matter of the affront. He should have handed his daughter himself when he perceived Mr Francis' intention."

"'Twas Mr Francis' position as Member of Council gave de

affair its sting," said Mrs Hastings thoughtfully. "Lady Impey was eager to discuss it with me, but I did not desire it brought into greater prominence. De real fault lies with Mrs Grand, who must have known she was not entitled to such an attention."

"Why, as to that, my dear, Mr Francis is such an universal genius that he may well have persuaded the poor woman it was her right. Did I tell you of his urgency with us to give him the command of the Militia, or, failing that, of our new Marine? Not desiring to throw either the black Christians or poor Price's crews into a state of mutiny, I was forced to disoblige him, and now he goes about sneering at the ships as the Company's Musquitto Fleet, and swearing that I had rather see the Militia ruined than appoint him to the command."

CHAPTER X.

AN AID-DU-CAMP.

CALCUTTA, *Oct. ye* 10*th*, 1778.

Mr Hastings has now formally committed to me the task he was pleased to suggest in a sportive moment, and I find it no easy one. I was mending some lace this afternoon in Mrs Hastings' dressing-room when the black woman at the door announced "*Burra Saub hye*," and in came Mr Hastings, followed by a tall young gentleman in a military dress. Learning from me that his lady, believing him fully occupied for another hour, was taking an airing in the coach with Miss Touchet, he brought forward the young gentleman, and presented him with extreme ceremony.

"Lieutenant Maxwell, ma'am," he said, then turned to the gentleman. "Mr Maxwell will believe I am doing him the greatest favour in my power in making him known to the excellent Mrs Ward, who is good enough to reside with Mrs

Hastings in the character of a friend, and assist her in the œconomy of her household. To enjoy her acquaintance is an honour, but should he be so happy as to be admitted to her friendship, that fact will be a passport for him to the esteem of all wise and virtuous persons. I shall trust to see him profit by the privilege."

The young gentleman had bowed repeatedly, in as hasty and awkward a manner as can well be imagined, while Mr Hastings was speaking, and now, seeing that some remark from him was expected, grew redder than before, if that were possible, and in the gruffest voice in the world muttered that he would endeavour to be worthy—and stopped short.

"I had hoped to present Mr Maxwell to Mrs Hastings myself," the Governor-General continued, "but I am forced to drop down to Budge-budgia and inspect the progress of the fortifications, and therefore I'll ask Mrs Ward to perform the office in my place."

The piteous look which the unfortunate Mr Maxwell turned upon his patron on finding himself thus abandoned can scarce be imagined, but Mr Hastings observed it with entire unconcern, and bowed himself out of the apartment with his accustomed politeness. Having invited the young gentleman to take a seat (which he did in the remotest corner he could find), I took up my work again, in order to be able to look at him without his perceiving it. I judged him to be about my own age, or possibly a year or two older,—though he might have been five years younger, and fresh taken from school to be clapped into the Company's uniform, from the uneasiness of his air. He was burnt brown with the sun, which gave him a very odd appearance now that his countenance was suffused with a crimson blush, and he wore his own hair, without powder or any of the fripperies of decoration which the *maccaronies* of Fort William affect so prodigiously. To complete the strangeness of his aspect, the full uniform dress he wore appeared to have been made for him some years ago, from the shortness of the sleeves, and its unaccustomed magnificence rendered him as stiff and awkward as if he had been encased in a suit of armour. I grew more and more distressed with these observations, for I

found it difficult to frame any remark that might set him at his ease, since 'twas clear his life had been spent in a world to which I was a stranger.

"You have lived long up the country, sir?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Is this your first visit to Calcutta, sir?"

"No, ma'am." I had hoped he was about to say more, but he thought better of it.

"Do you perceive much change in the place, sir?"

"Yes—no, ma'am; I can't say."

"Come!" I thought, "he has uttered three words!" "I trust you had an agreeable voyage down the river, sir?"

"I—I don't know, ma'am."

"The creature will perjure himself if I question him much longer!" I said to myself. "Yet you can't have been sorry to be transferred to the capital, sir?"

"No, ma'am—I suppose not."

I tried another method. "Since you belong to the Artillery, sir, are you acquainted with Colonel Pearse?"

"I have served under him, ma'am."

"He is a most respectable person," I said.

Mr Maxwell looked up quickly, and I remarked the acuteness of his gaze. "The best officer in Bengall," said he.

"Then perhaps you are grieved to forsake the service over which he presides, even to enter Mr Hastings' family?" I ventured to inquire.

"Ma'am," said the young gentleman, a generous ardour suffusing his visage afresh, "I can't speak of Mr Hastings, but I should count it my dearest honour to die for him."

This warmth, so consonant with my own sentiments, awoke in me a lively interest in the speaker. "Pray, sir," I said, "do me the favour to tell me which of Mr Hastings' virtues moves you to so much emotion?"

"Why, ma'am," he spoke freely, and forgetting his former stiffness, "think you it's nothing to a man when the person to whom, in common with every military man in Bengall, he has looked up as the embodiment of wisdom and virtue, suddenly reveals himself as having watched his career with an indulgent

eye, and extends him a patronage for which he could never have dared to hope?"

"Indeed, sir, I can picture his delight. But won't you please to inform me how you made this charming discovery?"

"I was summoned into Bankypore, ma'am, from the out-station where I was serving, and told that the Governor-General had designated me for special employment. It seems that a translate of a Persian poem, such as I and several of the young gentlemen in the Service were wont to amuse our leisure with and send about to one another, came under the eye of Mr Hastings, who is curious in such things, and confirmed him in the good opinion he had been kind enough to form of me already. Then I learned that he designed to take me into his own family—— But I ask your pardon, ma'am, for teazing you with things relating only to myself."

"Oh, sir!" I cried, "have I shown any weariness that you should deprive me so cruelly of listening to Mr Hastings' praises? Pray continue. You was questionless overwhelmed with joy?"

"Why, ma'am," he said, "I won't hide from you that at first I was overwhelmed with dismay. I had taken it into my head that another paper of my writing—a narrative of a hunting expedition in a part never before visited by a European—had attracted the Governor-General's notice, and that he was about to despatch me to join Colonel Leslie's force in Boondelcund, a prospect that excited my liveliest anticipations. It an't that I'm insensible to the honour he has conferred on me, ma'am——"

"But you had far rather be in Boondelcund than here?" I could not resist saying.

"Oh, how infinitely, ma'am!" His tone passed from the deepest earnestness to a sudden perception of the sentiment to which he had given utterance, and his air of mute misery would have drawn pity from a stone.

"Come, sir," I said, encouraging him with a smile, and concealing with a heroism of which I had not thought myself capable the wound he had just dealt me, "you must not lose heart. After all, if Boondelcund be your aim, you are nearer to it here than at Bankypore."

The red in Mr Maxwell's countenance gave place once more to a sunburnt hue, and in the pleasing belief that I had not observed his incivility, he answered in a tolerably agreeable and rational manner my observations on the proceedings of the Central India force, remarking that Colonel Leslie had only succeeded in covering a hundred and forty miles in five months, and that the army entertained no doubt that he was delaying among the Bundellas in the hope of receiving a prodigious bribe for settling the affairs of their rival chieftains. In return, I told him the malicious jest which Mr Francis has repeated for all Calcutta from a letter of his vivacious correspondent in the force, namely, that were Colonel Leslie to arrive at the gate of Heaven and find it a turnpike, 'twould cost him too dear to disburse the necessary halfpenny, and he would contentedly take the opposite road. Thus we were conversing in the freest possible style when Mrs Hastings and Miss Touchet returned from their airing, and Mr Maxwell's momentary ease departing, he became more crimson, more silent, and more awkward than ever. To put a climax to his misfortunes, he contrived in some way to entangle his sword with the pedestal which supported a magnificent porcelain dragon, of the true pea-green colour, which was brought as a present to Mrs Hastings by the captain of a China ship only this last season, and overturn it. Pitying his confusion, Mrs Hastings made light of the accident; but the young gentleman's misery was so excessively evident that she recommended him at last to join the other aids-du-camp, telling him where to find them. Then, when the door was closed behind him, the poor man fell a victim to three female tongues, which dealt cruelly with his appearance, manners, and disposition, until Mr Hastings returned upon the scene.

"Come, come," said he. "I gather that my poor Maxwell is being subjected to criticism. What is the unhappy youth's crime?"

"He has destroyed my sweet lovely monster!" cried Mrs Hastings.

"Then he has earned my sincerest gratitude. What besides?"

"He desired to make his escape when I appeared," said pretty Miss Touchet. "I hadn't known I was so terrifying an object."

"Pshaw, ma'am! pure prudence on his part. And has Mrs Ward nothing to allege against him?"

"Indeed, sir, he told me he had far rather be with the force in Boondelcund than conversing with me."

"Then he certainly deserves to be sent to join it. Is that the verdict of the ladies? Must the noble savage return to his original wilds?"

"For my part," says Mrs Hastings, "I can't see why he was taken from a situation where he was employed agreeably to himself and oders. Why should poor Mrs Ward have de burden of teaching a bear to dance?"

"Pray, dear sir," said Miss Touchet from the footstool on which she sat at Mrs Hastings' feet, "be so good as to make us sharers of your own opinion in the matter. We know you must have excellent reasons for transferring the gentleman to a sphere which he seems at first sight so little calculated to adorn, and we should be honoured by hearing them."

"There's a note of smiling defiance in your remarks, ma'am, that makes me tremble for the happiness of my poor friend Motte." Miss Touchet, in pretended confusion, hid her face in Mrs Hastings' gown. "But as Mrs Ward has suffered most at the young gentleman's hands, I'll take her opinion first. Pray, ma'am, shall Mr Maxwell have his desire, and go to Boondelcund?"

I was excessively confused by this direct appeal, for my sentiments towards Mr Maxwell had altered in the most surprising manner while Mrs Hastings and Miss Touchet were speaking. In spite of the vexation his behaviour had caused me, I began to feel that I was in some way responsible for him, and that the malicious observations of the two ladies reflected upon me, though I knew this was far from being their intention. "Indeed, sir," I cried, "I think there are the makings of a man of sense and principle in the young gentleman; and if you chuse to allow him the benefit of your example and patronage, you may rely upon me to do my best to make him worthier of them by correcting his manners."

"Den I'll thank you not to carry on de process in my dressing-room, Hester," said Mrs Hastings. "Dere's no porcelain

in de varendar, and you may best conduct your school of manners dere."

"Mrs Ward hath answered me with the benevolence and liberality which so often compel me to regard her as a venerable parent, and myself as her youthful grandson," says Mr Hastings. "Well, then, ladies, I'll unfold these weighty reasons of mine for desiring the youth's attendance here, and not only my selfish need of his Persian attainments. I have an odd prejudice, which increases as I grow older, in favour of what the ancients would have styled the complete man. Now Mr Maxwell, abandoned to his own tastes and pursuits up the country, was near becoming an officer of a tolerably common type, devoted to his military duties and field sports, and displaying an admirable interest in the arts and letters of the Indians, but almost as far removed as the Gentoos themselves from the society of Europeans. There are two courses, both of 'em strongly to be deprecated, before such a man. He's wounded, or has a severe attack of fever, or merely learns in the monotony of his quarters that man, as the philosophers tell us, is a social being, and he contracts a matrimonial alliance with a Moorish female, who may be of respectable or even distinguished parentage, but is not qualified to assist him to become either a better Briton or a better Christian. Mrs Ward is acquainted with the results of such a marriage in the case of her late uncle. Or else, as with Colonel Leslie, in whom a sordid and disgusting avarice appears to have overpowered every military quality, he devotes himself to the acquisition of fortune, piling up lacks with no higher end in view than to return to England as a *Nabob*, displaying the usual marks of the species —a chariot at his door, Madeira on his table, gold lace on his coat, and a black behind his chair. This is particularly the temptation of a man who has known the extreme of poverty, like Mr Maxwell. Judge, then, my Marian, and you, Mrs Ward and Miss Touchet, whether I have done well in endeavouring to rescue this young gentleman from such surroundings, and to restore him to polite society while he was still capable of civilisation."

"Indeed, Hastings, you display your good heart here as always," said his lady

"And when the gentleman displays his good manners we shall all confess Mr Hastings justified," said Miss Touchet with a charming pertness.

Oct. ye 29th.

I have found no cause to regret my assurance in championing Mr Maxwell, who proves himself still sufficiently young to be eminently capable of civilisation, as Mr Hastings put it. The other gentlemen of the family of our common patron have been good enough to instruct him in the important particulars of clothes and hair-dressing, and I have, to say the least, no reason to blush for his appearance when he attends me upon the Course or in company. It's true that Mr Francis, with malicious delight, has put it about that the Governor-General's new aid-du-camp can converse like a native in every language but his own, but the young gentleman himself is wise enough to accept this *hit* at his habitual silence as an excellent jest. I wish that all Mr Francis' performances might be productive of as little bitterness for the persons affected, but I can scarce write with patience of his late political action. Rather more than three weeks ago Mr Hastings determined, for the sake alike of the army and the operations in the Bombay Presidency, to recall Colonel Leslie from the post he has disgraced, and place his second in command, Lieutenant-Colonel Goddard, at the head of the Boondelcund force, with the local rank of Colonel. Only to persons of the acutest sensibility is it possible to imagine the distress which filled the mind of Mr Hastings in thus shamefully terminating an honoured career, and least of all could that man do so who would at any moment sacrifice a friend for the sake of a witty speech. With gusto has Mr Francis proclaimed throughout Calcutta that the Governor-General was overwhelmed with indecision before taking his decisive action, and afterwards so much afflicted with regret as to be weary of his life, while his triumphant critic, strong in the assurances of support from home that reach him by every pacquet, is hardly concerned to add to his misery, confident of occupying his seat before many months are past.

By the whole of Mr Hastings' family, therefore, the highest satisfaction was felt when, precisely a week after the orders to

the army in Boondelcund had been despatched, there arrived news which rendered the Governor-General's sorrow unnecessary. Colonel Goddard wrote that in consequence of Colonel Leslie's death on the 4th of this month (three days before the order for his recall was despatched), he himself had taken command of the force pending directions from Calcutta. He was immediately confirmed in his possession of the post; and to-day Mr Maxwell, who has the honour to be of his acquaintance, received a letter in which he announced his immediate departure from the regions in which his predecessor lingered so culpably. Miss Touchet, who is to be married to Mr Motte in January, was with me in the parlour, for she spends a good part of each day here, consulting Mrs Hastings upon her wedding-clothes, most of which are being made by our patroness's taylors, who are, as is only proper, the best in the settlement. When the young gentleman joined us, he brought a message to Mrs Hastings that required an answer, and as she had been summoned elsewhere, he began while waiting to tell us of his noble friend's letter.

"Sure the Colonel's the most enterprising man in India!" he cried. "I dare be bound he'll reach the Nerbudda in the time it would have taken Colonel Leslie to break camp. And this zeal of his an't on his own account, but solely for the sake of Mr Hastings. He says that now the command is fallen into his hands, he's hopeful of preserving what he holds most dear—the fame and character of the gentleman who's so deeply interested in the event of his operations. He asks nothing but that, and prides himself on quitting the diamond-mines without gaining possession of so much as a trinket."

"Well, as to that, I don't see that diamonds can offer much temptation to a gentleman," said Miss Touchet, with whom the topic is a sore one, since Mr Francis, ignoring absolutely the elevated character and amiable manners of Mr Motte, has thought fit to observe that he must questionless have wooed his mistress in a shower of diamonds, thus improving upon the classical example. "Even if he lavish them on his sword-hilt and buckles and hat-buttons, he has sufficiently little chance to display them."

Mr Maxwell smiled. "Why, ma'am," he said, "you'll allow

they offered sufficient temptation to poor Colonel Leslie. But he didn't design them for his personal decoration; to him they were but a convenient means of amassing fortune and remitting it home, as they are to so many more. Until Mr Hastings' unceasing labours are crowned with success, and the Company are brought to allow their servants a wage sufficient to support existence and provide against old age, so long will the sight of possible wealth prove too severe a trial for the virtue of the man who's conscious that after a life of hardship he must look forward to a death in penury."

"You speak with feeling, sir," said I.

"Indeed," said Miss Touchet, "I was wondering where the silent gentleman was who was presented to us three weeks ago. Dearest Mrs Ward, does your tuition include the imparting of eloquence?"

Disregarding this raillery, Mr Maxwell addressed himself to me. "If I speak with undue warmth, ma'am, you must please to attribute it to my early experiences. When I first came out, regarding Bengall as a region of fabulous wealth, I found myself poorer than any the poorest ensign of the King's forces. For three years my bed was a piece of canvas stretched on four sticks, and I had no pillow beyond a book or a cartridge-case. I went abroad in an old coat and a ragged shirt, and often marched from sunrise to sunset with only a drink of water, leading my horse, for the poor beast was too weak to carry me."

"Dear sir," says Miss Touchet sweetly, "forgive me for laughing at you just now. I can fully believe your extremity would have drove you to attach any quantity of diamonds that fell in your way. But you won't make me consider"—affecting not to observe the young gentleman's disconcerted appearance—"that anybody can put a proper value on diamonds that regards them merely as so much cash. If he can adorn a lady with them——"

"In the manner of Mr Hastings," interrupted Mr Maxwell.

"And why not, sir? You speak as if you was one of those vile creatures that grudge our dear Mrs Hastings her *shouq* for jewels."

"The matter don't concern me, ma'am; but nobody can live a week in Calcutta and not learn to regret this single weakness of the lady we all respect. Her parade of jewellery at all seasons serves more than anything else to strengthen the hands of the Governor-General's enemies."

"And you, a member of his family, can listen calmly to these slanders, and repeat them!" cried Miss Touchet. "Would I were a man, and wore a sword, that I might confront the calumniators!"

"Indeed, ma'am, I—I——" stammered the young gentleman, but I thought it time to interpose.

"My dear Miss Touchet must not misunderstand Mr Maxwell. His remark was wanting in respect, but he intended no slight to Mrs Hastings, and will soon learn not to credit the malicious rumours of the settlement. But you used a word a minute ago with which I an't acquainted, ma'am. Pray what is the meaning of *shouq?*"

"Why, it's what we should call a rage or *furore*," said Miss Touchet, recovering her good humour when she saw Mr Maxwell sit confounded under her attack and my rebuke. "But, dear Mrs Ward, it makes me ashamed to be catched using Moorish words before you, who are so learned. Why, Mr Hastings said t'other day there was something in your manner of speech that reminded him irresistibly of his revered friend Dr Johnson."

"Oh no!" I cried. "That would be too great a compliment —and from such a critic as Mr Hastings! Oh, dear Miss, are you sure he said precisely that? It's true I often acted as the secretary of my venerable grandpapa when he was engaged in a correspondence with that great man, and I may insensibly have catched up something of his style. Pray, Miss, tell me exactly what Mr Hastings said."

"Why, indeed, I've told it you to the best of my recollection," said she, "though I wish I'd listened with more attention since it pleases you so much. But I don't concern myself with things of that sort. Why, Mr Hastings rallies me perpetually because I once spelt Cæsar with an S in writing from his dictation. I told him 'twas of no consequence, but I know the

right spelling now, in case I am again required as scribe—C-e-a-s-e-r!"[1]

Mr Maxwell's eyes sought mine as if involuntarily, but before either of us could offer to set the young lady right, Mrs Hastings returned.

Dec. ye 30th.

The year terminates in gloom, both public and private, the sole gleam of brightness that has of late visited the settlement being the capitulation of Pondicherry to Sir Edward Vernon, of which the news reached us near six weeks ago. Our little squadron under Captain Price—"The Company's Musquitto Fleet," as Mr Francis and his friends style it—took an active part in the operations, and a *feu de joye* was fired from Fort William on the occasion. Colonel Goddard has also not disappointed the expectations of his friends, and brought his force as far as the Nerbudda in an incredibly short time; but his celerity has only served to impel the Bombay Committee to the strongest resentment. In the fear either that he would interrupt their plans, or that he would deprive them of the credit they expected, they made haste to set out on their adventure of restoring Ruggobah before he could come up, ordering him to return to Bengall. This order the Colonel, who has now been released from the authority of the Bombay gentlemen, did not chuse to obey; but their precipitancy can't fail to have the worst possible results on the negociations with Moodajee Bounceloe, in which Colonel Goddard, at the Prince's own request, has been appointed Mr Elliot's successor. The year's end, therefore, sees Bombay, in defiance of the orders and entreaties of Mr Hastings, embarked with a ridiculously small force upon an enterprise of immense magnitude, while the commander who should have had the affair in hand is—so far as we can understand—still detained in Berar by the suspicions excited in the ruler's mind by the movement. It beholds, moreover, the Judges arrogating to themselves fresh consequence, putting forward every day more exorbitant demands, and even endeavouring to fix a quarrel upon the Governor-General over some slight they

[1] This is Mrs Motte's spelling in a letter preserved in the Hastings Collection.

allege to have been put upon them with reference to a visit paid to Sadit Ally, brother of the Nabob-Vizier of Owd, who was passing the settlement.

Moreover, Mr Barwell, who last month suffered the irreparable loss of his lovely and amiable lady by death, declared to Mr Hastings almost immediately his fixed determination to resign the Service and convey his two infant sons home. The prospect opened by this intention was so alarming that Mr Hastings felt compelled to combat it in the very strongest terms; but having once urged his objections, with his usual moderation he left Mr Barwell to consider them without further entreaty. It's no secret among Mr Barwell's intimates that Mr Francis and Mr Wheler bent all their energies to detach him from Mr Hastings at this crisis, assuring him that if he remained in India he would find himself involved inextricably in the ruin and disgrace which they predicted for the Governor-General, and promising him the most complete security and advancement if he returned to England. So unsuspicious did they believe the poor gentleman that they even sought to amuse him with hopes of becoming Governor-General himself if he returned to press his claims on the Directors, though it's well known that Mr Francis has marked that office for his own, and considers it as belonging to him already. Fortunately Mr Barwell perceived from their importunities how much advantage they would derive from his departure, and was good enough to delay it at least till the arrival of Sir Eyre Coote, the new Commander-in-Chief,—who comes out, so Mr Hastings' friends assure him, with an open mind, though Mr Francis claims him as belonging, body and soul, to his party. Thus the Governor-General is relieved for the present from the fear of finding himself once more in a perpetual minority on his own Council, and of seeing Colonel Goddard recalled, which he would, as he says, rather suffer death than permit.

Of the last of the recent misfortunes which have befallen the settlement I can't speak particularly, but it has exhibited Mr Francis as the destroyer of family affection, and banished the unhappy Mrs Grand from the society of the virtuous. I can't and won't believe that the unfortunate creature was designedly

guilty of more than levity in admitting the attentions of a person so superior in rank and fortune to her husband, and I am persuaded that a less strained sense of honour on the part of Mr Grand, and a more open and liberal behaviour on that of Mr Francis, might have enabled the friends of the estranged couple to effect a reconciliation. Much as the custom of duelling is to be deplored, it has yet in a case such as this something of the chivalrous in the convention which ordains that the person accused of injuring another shall fire his pistol in the air, and stand unarmed to receive his opponent's fire. Had Mr Francis chosen to face this ordeal, whether he had been wounded or escaped unscathed, his declaration of Mrs Grand's innocence must have carried weight; but the contemptuous terms in which he declined a meeting could not but exasperate yet further any man of spirit who conceived himself so deeply injured as Mr Grand. Moreover, as though to emphasize his contempt for the opinion of the settlement, Mr Francis now goes nowhere unattended by his cousin, Major Baggs, a noted duellist lately arrived from Europe, who swaggers about Calcutta with an air that appears to invite the entire universe to pick a quarrel with himself or his relative and be killed.

CHAPTER XI.

A VETERAN.

CALCUTTA, *April ye 28th*, 1779.

I have added nothing to these memoirs of mine for several months, not having the heart to record the disgrace brought upon the British arms by the alternate rashness and pusillanimity of the Bombay Committee, and cherishing the vain hope that the arrival of later letters might tend in some slight degree to diminish it. But since the whole affair appears in a worse light the more detailed the intelligence of it, I will recount its

history in the briefest possible style, lest silence on my part should dim the deserved lustre attaching to the fame of that great man whose astonishing constancy of spirit I have the privilege daily to contemplate. The Bombay gentlemen, fascinated, to all appearance, by their interesting client so far as to undertake to support his cause by force of arms in direct contravention of their orders from Bengall, were no happier in the execution than the conception of their operations. Forgetting, as I have heard Mr Hastings observe, that the sole justification of disobedience is success, they would appear to have devised matters with the greatest ingenuity so as to render success impossible. Appointing to the command of their forces Colonel Egerton, an officer of worth and distinction, but totally incapacitated by age and ill-health, they attempted to supply his defects by nominating two gentlemen to assist him under the title of Field-Deputies, these being Mr Carnac, one of their own number, and Mr Mostyn, lately resident at Poona. The last soon retiring on account of sickness, Colonel Egerton found himself under the rule of Mr Carnac, who claimed military honours and the supreme command, and was supported by the Committee. Hampered by a train of 19,000 bullocks for the accommodation of a force of less than 4,000 men, the army exceeded even the exploits of Colonel Leslie by requiring eleven days to cover a distance of eight miles. This excessive tardiness was in great part due to the vanity of Ruggobah, who, with his own black troops and what he styled his "Christian Company" of mixed Europeans, insisted on heading the advance. As he carried with him a great number of elephants for the accommodation of his women and officers, and the country was covered with water owing to the winter rains, the huge feet of these animals filled the ground with pitfalls. Into these, which were invisible by reason of the surrounding water, the Europeans who followed were perpetually falling, so that it's said one half of the army was cursing with disgust, and t'other half roaring with laughter, during the whole period.

In spite of this unhappy commencement, the army succeeded in reaching a village called Tullygaunge, only eighteen miles from Poona, having been perpetually harassed, though never

openly attacked, by the Marattas. But at this moment, when success appeared in their grasp, the disunion and inefficiency which had been the curse of the expedition rose suddenly to an overpowering height, and, to the astonishment and disgust of the army, negociations were opened with the enemy! Sure the gentlemen in command must have been in reality planet-struck, as Mr Hastings says; for how can one conceive it possible that a mere vulgar panic should seize upon the two commanders of an eager and sufficient army? The entreaties of Colonel Cockburn, the next in command, and the piteous remonstrances of the unfortunate Ruggobah, for advance, or at least for delay in retreating, were rejected; and having thrown their heavy guns into a tank, and burnt a great part of their stores, Messieurs Egerton and Carnac began their retirement. The Marattas, hitherto too prudent to offer battle, now plucked up sufficient spirit to attack the force both in front and rear, and only the courage of Captain Hartley, who displayed with his Seapoys a capacity and valour almost sufficient to redeem the name of the expedition, enabled it to retreat as far as the village of Worgaum. Here it was surrounded by the enemy in great numbers, and in the course of one day's fighting sustained a terrible loss by death and desertion. Even in this hour of disaster the gallant Hartley was prepared with a plan by which a safe retreat might be effected; but his superiors, including even Colonel Cockburn, preferred to come to terms with the Marattas. Ruggobah, with a well-justified belief that he would be the first sacrificed, anticipated his quondam friends by surrendering himself to Mahdajee Scindia, and they made haste to prove him in the right by signing an instrument by which they gave up near everything they possessed. Will future ages credit the degree of baseness attained by Mr Carnac when, in endeavouring to justify himself for resigning all that the Company had gained on that coast during twenty years, he asserts that he signed the convention to deceive the Marattas, making a mental reservation that he had no intention of observing it!

The first rumour of the disgrace of Worgaum reached Calcutta in February, contained in a letter to the Nabob of Arcott from Row-Gee, his Vackeel at Poona; but little importance was

attached to it owing to the readiness of the Indians to magnify any trifling reverse into a great defeat. Mr Hastings, assured of Mr Barwell's continued support, awaited more definite intelligence with equanimity, though the assurance and violence of Mr Francis was now risen to an incredible pitch, to the extent that he declared openly in Council his expectation of being appointed Governor-General by the despatches that would come out with Sir Eyre Coote. About the middle of March arrived a brief letter from Bombay acquainting the Governor-General and Council that the army had been defeated and returned to the city, and that a treaty had been made which was about to be disavowed. This scanty news was sufficient to set Mr Francis foaming at the mouth, with such zeal did he represent himself as an inspired prophet whose predictions, long rejected, were at length proved true. Disregarding the fact that the defeat had taken place within three days' journey of Bombay, he ascribed it, with all the vehemence in the world, to the dangerous policy of distant expeditions, and demanded furiously the recall of Colonel Goddard's detachment, for which (said he once again) a second Saratoga was in store. In this point his predictions have happily been falsified; for while he was assuring the world that he had it on indubitable authority from one of the up-country stations that the Colonel's force, deprived of a large portion of its strength and in the last extremity of hunger and thirst, was surrounded by multitudes of the Maratta cavalry, the disappointing intelligence (for him) arrived that it had reached Surat in safety, the Colonel having very coolly disregarded the contradictory orders of the Bombay Government and advanced in the most resolute style under his orders from Bengall.

But at the same time—only a day or two ago—that we were all rejoicing over the complete success of this bold venture, which has made the most secluded tribes of the centre of Indostan familiar with the aspect of British troops, there arrived the detailed letters from Bombay, with a copy of the treaty concluded at Worgaum, which made Mr Hastings, as he says, almost sink into the ground when he read it, for shame to see the British name so frightfully disgraced before the world. Indeed,

I believe there's a universal regret in Calcutta that it don't consist with the mildness of modern manners to deliver Mr Carnac up to the Marattas, as the Romans handed over to the Samnites their general who had concluded a disgraceful capitulation, that he might suffer a due punishment in his own person for the breach of the agreement he never intended to keep. Since this an't to be thought of, Mr Hastings has done his best to set matters right for the future by entrusting all negociations with the Marattas to Colonel Goddard, who is appointed Brigadier-General and continued in his command independent of the Bombay Committee, and instructed to endeavour for a treaty based on that of Poorunder. Regardless alike of the fretful complaints of the Bombay gentlemen at this invasion upon their rights and the violent minutes of Mr Francis, the great man to whom it has pleased Heaven to entrust the fate of the British dominion in India proceeds calmly upon his fixed path, though the negociations with Berar, to which he attached so much importance, are irretrievably ruined, if not by the former precipitancy, yet now by the fatal pusillanimity, of the western Presidency.

BELVIDERE-HOUSE, ALLYPORE, *May ye 19th.*

In my eagerness to dispose of the disagreeable topic of the Worgaum Convention, I find that I have allowed to pass without mention two events of considerable moment to our little community. The first of these was the arrival by the *Southampton* in February of the newly appointed Advocate-General, Sir John Day, whose amiable character and pleasing manners would render him an acquisition to any society. Though pledged by all the ties of friendship and party allegiance to Mr Francis, he has declined to let this prepossession blind him to the high qualities by which Mr Hastings is so pre-eminently distinguished, and delights to encounter him upon the neutral ground of social intercourse. Lady Day is a young woman of extreme beauty of person and of an extraordinary elegance, the sister of Mr Ramus, a young gentleman in the Service, who is well known as the handsomest and most empty-headed youth in Calcutta. Their father enjoying the appointment of page to his Majesty, both brother and sister are recognised to be persons of the highest

ton, and for more than a month the settlement could talk of little else than the foreign and romantic cast of Lady Day's beauty, her charmingly odd Christian name (she is called Benedicta), and the splendour of her dress and equipages.

That Lady Day's reign lasted no more than a month an't to be attributed to any lack of merit on her ladyship's part, but to the provision of a new object of interest in the household of Sir Eyre Coote. The good old General himself, extensive as his services and his fame may be, is neither attractive to the eye nor qualified to shine in company by reason of his manners or conversation, but he has the good fortune to be married to a very fine young lady, the most vivacious and sprightly of beings. Lady Coote's father was Governor of the island of St Helena, and in that isolated spot she formed a romantic attachment for a charming young lady of her own age, Miss Molly Brancepeth.[1] Desiring to close for ever the mouths of the sneerers at female friendship, so numerous at the present day, these amiable young creatures entered into an engagement never to be separated, with the pleasing result that Miss Brancepeth, showing herself adamant to the most influential suitors, has resided with Lady Coote since her marriage, and accompanied her even to this distant shore. The arrival of this interesting pair eclipsed even the charms of Lady Day, and the period succeeding their entrance upon the Calcutta stage was one of the most animated the settlement has known. It contributed in no slight degree to increase the innocent gaiety of the time that Mr Francis was once more proved a false prophet; for so far was Sir Eyre Coote from bringing out the despatches that were to make him Governor-General, that he even refused, in the most resolute manner, to pledge himself to his indiscriminating support. Extraordinary as it must appear, when the frantic efforts of Mr Francis' friends in England, and the powerful influence brought to bear by Administration, are considered, the General has succeeded in landing in Bengall while still preserving an open mind on the subjects which distract the Government here, and has gone so far as to announce it as his rule of conduct to devote himself exclusively to the concerns of the military department, and judge

[1] History remembers this lady only as Miss Molly B——.

every other question that may come before him entirely on its merits.

There can be little doubt that the respectable veteran has been much encouraged in this impartial attitude by the liberal and genteel behaviour adopted by Mr Hastings, who finds his dearest hope fulfilled in it. Yet such is the true politeness of the Governor-General, that before he could possibly be acquainted with Sir Eyre Coote's equitable intentions he prepared to receive him with all, and more than all, the ceremony that the most exacting of men could have desired. "I have had one sharp lesson," he said to us, smiling, "on the danger of undervaluing my new associates, and the General shan't think himself slighted, whatever happens." In pursuance of this prudent policy, and stimulated by the frank conduct of the General, Mr Hastings has had the pleasure of meeting his wishes in various points, such as by giving into his hands the complete control of the military department, arranging for his maintenance and allowances upon a suitable scale, and obtaining for him the possession of the house and grounds of Gyretty, recently in the occupation of Mr Chevalier, but granted to the General as much as seventeen years ago by a *sunnud* or charter of the Nabob Cossim Ally Cawn.

These concessions have aroused the most violent passions in the breast of Mr Francis, who had looked on the General as his predestined ally, and found him his unflinching opponent in his very first attempt to steal an advantage over Mr Hastings by his means. On the question, which was one regarding the agency at Bennaris, Sir Eyre Coote replied, with great coolness, that he was determined on a total absence of retrospection in all matters that had preceded his arrival, so that the incident was for him absolutely closed. Mr Francis was unable to restrain his anger at this reply, and went raving against the General all over Calcutta. Even now he can't hear his name mentioned without exhibiting the most intense bitterness, as happened last evening. Mr Maxwell (who attended the Commander-in-Chief and his family to Gyretty, on Mr Hastings' behalf, to see them suitably established) happening to remark that the General was busying himself over the improvement of the house, and laying out the

gardens and building a riding-school for the pleasure of his lady, Mr Francis observed with the most cruel contempt, "Any one would think the old fool had an age to live!" Mr Hastings replying jocularly that the General was very likely to see both himself and Mr Francis under the sod, the matter dropped, though Mr Francis still sat pinching his chin with an air of excessive disgust. As I looked at him, and contrasted his morose aspect with the air of easy benevolence which sits enthroned on the countenance of Mr Hastings, I experienced the same feeling of wonder as when I first entered Calcutta at the daily polite intercourse of these two gentlemen, whose opinions and aims are so constantly opposed to one another. Did all *business opponents* feel compelled to shun one another in their private life, the result would questionless be intolerable in such a community as this, where friends and enemies are forced to encounter each other perpetually, and could not, if they would, go further for avoidance' sake than Bearcole in the one direction and Sooksaugur in the other. But that a person in Mr Hastings' situation should frequently entertain the man whose declared desire it is to occupy his place is a thing that surprises me even more than the general toleration extended to Mr Francis, though this is sufficiently astonishing. The general morality of the European inhabitants of Calcutta an't so high that any very strict judgment need be anticipated from them; but I had not expected to find Mr Francis' strongest defenders among the ladies, who, with all their cry of "Shocking creature! A sad wicked fellow!" in company, appear to find his assiduities no less agreeable than before. I can perceive that the official situation of Mr Hastings may preclude him from displaying that abhorrence of Mr Francis' behaviour which I know he feels and which he has testified to the great resentment of Mr Francis himself; but I wonder that he should honour him with an invitation to this agreeable retreat, where we are now residing during the hot weather. Nor is it that Mr Francis has manifested either repentance or gratitude, since I believe with all my soul that he's destitute of both.

These disagreeable reflections were still in my mind when we rose from supper, and Mr Maxwell desired to know if he might

attend me into the garden. Looking back to my last mention of this young gentleman, I see that I have not yet remarked the vast improvement in his air and manners caused by a cold season spent in Calcutta, and—if I may say it without vanity—under my tuition. He is now a very pretty fellow, though by no means a *maccaroni*,—a part for which he has no taste, even would Mr Hastings allow a member of his family in it. As for his conversation, I have sat by with much satisfaction and heard him sustain a brisk fire of raillery from one of the most garrulous of our *ton* young ladies with equal coolness and modesty, and when supplanted with her by a swain more to her taste, turn to discourse of a becoming sobriety with Padra Kiernander or the respectable Dr Jackson. This evening I had observed a further alteration in him, in the direction of a greater vivacity and a more assured readiness of speech, and wondered whether it was produced by his brief visit to the General's, or whether his absence had merely caused me to remark a change which had been long in progress. In the garden, which is laid out with the greatest taste imaginable, we spoke of Sir Eyre Coote and his excellent disposition, and I was surprised to find that Mr Maxwell regarded the future in a less roseate light than I.

"Sure the General has every right to be regarded as a person of the utmost honour and discretion," said I.

"Why, yes, ma'am, so far; but in the course of my short attendance on him I have observed an odd sort of testy fickleness—a readiness to take offence at the person who pleased him best the moment before—which seemed to me so irritating that even the forbearance of Mr Hastings might be tasked to meet it."

"Nay," said I, "how can a gentleman who has obtained more than he could possibly have anticipated find anything to take offence at?"

"Why, ma'am, an't it often to be observed that those who have least reason are the most on the alert to discover monstrous slights? Mr Hastings can't divest himself, if he would, of his supreme control over the military department, however completely he may relinquish the executive power into the General's hands. And what's to happen when they're of different minds?

Now there's the matter of the Golandauz.[1] The General has already declared against them, either on account of some imagined affront he conceives to have been put on him by Colonel Pearse, or because as a King's officer he inclines in every way to diminish the consequence of the Company's troops. But Mr Hastings is the Colonel's friend and patron, and has repeatedly commended the discipline of the Golandauz. Now if the General desire to disband them, as it's already whispered in the army that he does, what then?"

"Well, sir, what then?"

"Well, ma'am, I should suppose a further showering of favours on the General, unless he's to join Mr Francis in a fit of pique."

"For shame, sir! Would you intimate that Mr Hastings has bribed the General to remain neuter thus far?"

"I would not, ma'am; but I don't doubt Mr Hastings' enemies will. When young Miss or Master roars and howls in the parlour because it's forbid them to trample on the best china, and the fond mama stops the outcry with a handful of sweetmeats, her female friends are apt to call that a bribe, an't they?"

"I don't perceive any the slightest resemblance in the cases, sir."

"Indeed, ma'am, when a person notoriously testy and tender of his consequence conducts himself like a lamb for two entire months, and is further found to be in possession of a number of favours never before granted to a person in his situation, there's a certain parallel that won't be wholly missed."

"But Mr Hastings has given nothing that was not justly deserved. The degree of ceremony when the General landed was as honourable for the one to receive as for the other to grant."

"Precisely, ma'am; but what of the additional allowances given to Sir Eyre Coote above his predecessors, and the house and grounds of Gyretty?"

"Why, sir, I have heard every officer that spoke of it say the new allowances were absolutely necessary. General Claver-

[1] Native artillery.

ing contrived to exist on less because he never quitted Calcutta, and the up-country stations might have vanished from the face of the earth for all he knew of 'em. And Gyretty was actually the General's own property, granted him by the former Nabob."

"I'm not contending against the justice of the favours, ma'am, but against the expediency of granting them now and all at once. In his generous desire to satisfy the General by withholding nothing he could justly claim, Mr Hastings has retained nothing, the expectation of which might have bound the General to him, forgetting that the appetite of an avaricious person grows with each gratification. It's undeniable, I fear, that the General is willing to accept all that's offered him, as witness the star and epaulette of very rich diamonds that he received from the Nabob of Arcott on his way hither,—a gift that should have been refused."

"So I see it's Mr Hastings' wisdom you condemn, while you're good enough to grant him honesty?" said I.

"Such a word as 'condemn' was never in my thoughts, ma'am. At the worst I was lamenting the liberal temper that enables him to keep nothing back from his friends. 'If this or that will make the poor fellow happy,' he seems to say, 'I'll be shot if I'll withhold it from him!' You know yourself the extreme pain it causes him to be forced to deny anything to anybody, so that he's entreated his private friends not to make applications to him which he would be wrong to grant. Ah, madam, if you had spent these last few days in General Coote's family, as I have, and heard the gentlemen talk of Mr Hastings, you would not wonder that I would even see him withhold favours that were rightly merited, rather than afford Mr Francis another chance to speak of jobs."

"When you know that if Mr Hastings were to pluck a rose in the garden, and offer it with a genteel compliment to my Lady Coote, Mr Francis would read a job in the action!" I cried. "Oh, sir, I would never desire to see a generous mind lowered by a base prudence for the sake of conciliating an irreconcilable foe!"

"I wouldn't call that prudence base which acts with a wise

regard to the future, ma'am. How can I help seeing—or any other of our revered Mr Hastings' most loyal friends—that in too many of the concerns of government he exists, as they say, from hand to mouth, satisfying the crying needs of the moment as they arise, without considering that the method may prejudice his future action? The gradual steps by which the Judges have ascended to their present outrageous situation——"

"Oh, don't speak of the Judges!" I cried. "I have no patience when I consider that persons so infinitely indebted to Mr Hastings could so cruelly abuse his good nature."

"But they think themselves authorised, ma'am, by that very good nature. And indeed if things go on as they are, I see no course consistent both with the disposition of Mr Hastings and the peace of the Presidency but to buy 'em off. Oh," as I cried out, "'twill be a wise concession, questionless, effecting a just compromise between the rival interests, but granted then and in that manner, to the hostile party at home 'twill appear as a bribe. Moreover, it must be paid for, and where's the money to come from? The resources of the Presidency are already taxed for the Maratta War, Mr Hastings daren't stop the investment,[1] and the scheme of exacting forced contributions from the tributary Rajas for military purposes don't seem very promising, judging from the refractory disposition of the Bennaris fellow, Chyte Sing. Sure you must see, ma'am, I an't blaming Mr Hastings, only regretting that his methods should allow his enemies such a handle against him."

"I don't know what's happened to you, sir!" I cried. "As though all Mr Hastings' difficulties were not due to the bewildering circumstances of the time, and the intricacies of government through which he has to struggle! Pray lay the blame on those who sent him here and bade him work and fight, and then tied his hands. I fear I have been mistaken in you, sir. You have criticised your patron before in my hearing, but never with such unbecoming freedom as this. Pray why don't you offer to show him a better method?"

"Because I can't, ma'am," he replied very frankly. "I am

[1] The goods and specie consigned to the Company by each year's fleet, from which its dividends were paid.

one of those unhappy wretches who can see what's wrong, but can't suggest how it's to be corrected,—unlike the General's aids-du-camp, who were one and all full of plans for reforming every abuse they perceived. Perhaps I have listened too long to these newly arrived critics, who spoke as freely of their own patron as of mine. In any case, I see that I've wearied Mrs Ward with my observations."

"Why, no, sir," said I, disarmed by his frankness, "you have listened patiently enough to mine since you arrived in Calcutta to deserve a chance of making your own. But I'll confess——"

"That you didn't expect to find my opinions differ from yours?" he suggested, looking at me with a curious air that showed me again the change in him.

"I trust I an't so foolish as that, sir. Young Master starts out into the world, and the poor old dame by whose counsels he has hitherto regulated himself may go hang! Perhaps the gentlemen of the General's family were good enough to hint it was time this should happen here?"

"Rest assured, ma'am, that nothing they could say or hint could diminish in the slightest degree my respect and gratitude towards Mrs Ward," he said very earnestly, at the same moment that we met Mr Hastings in one of the paths. He smiled to perceive our serious countenances.

"What's the matter?" he asked us. "Has our fair moralist shown herself too severe upon the chance employments of a young man of fashion, pray?"

"Indeed, sir," I said, not understanding him, "Mr Maxwell is a stricter moralist than I. I have been seeking in vain to modify the severity of his judgments."

"Ah, ma'am, that's merely his cunning. He was trying to allure you away from a certain point. Maxwell, what's this I hear from Mr Francis—that you had a meeting with an aid-du-camp of the General's?"

"'Twas not meant to come to your ears, sir, but it's true. May I be permitted to attend you in private?"

"Mrs Ward is as nearly interested in you as I, sir. Do I understand you did me the honour to fight about me?"

"That was the occasion announced, sir."

"Then let this be the last of such encounters, I beg. Thank Heaven! Warren Hastings can protect his own reputation without two young fools making targets of one another over it. Do you perceive the infinite harm you might have done if this became known,—my family and the General's coming to blows near as soon as he lands? A meeting of this kind an't to be undertaken for a few rough words or a quarrel about the shape of a lady's chin"—he looked sharply at Mr Maxwell. "It should be reserved as the last resort where an intolerable insult has been offered, or the crowning touch given to a course of deceit and chicanery. Then you may risk your life in the confidence Heaven will guide the bullet aright. But in this case a celestial interference was happily unnecessary, as you're perhaps aware. What! you didn't perceive that the bullets were carefully drawn by the seconds, who were wiser than you, before the pistols were handed to you and your antagonist?"

I thought Mr Maxwell was near swooning, he turned so pale with disgust. Before he could speak, Mr Hastings continued—

"Those gentlemen had more care for my reputation than you had, after all. Go, sir, and be thankful you were prevented from embruing your hands in the blood of a fellow creature. Pray acquaint Mrs Hastings that we are returning to the house."

"Oh, sir," I cried, as the young gentleman passed out of sight, still walking as if in a dream, "how unkind, how unlike Mr Hastings, to put such an affront upon the unfortunate Mr Maxwell in the presence of a female! How could you have the heart to do it?"

"I had a very special reason," said Mr Hastings. "Mr Francis was good enough to inform me that the offending officer had spoke in a disrespectful style of a lady to whom Mr Maxwell considered himself deeply indebted, and that this was the true cause of the duel so happily rendered harmless. I was excessively anxious to see whether the youth would betray the fact, which I knew Mrs Ward would learn from Mr Francis soon enough. 'Twas a test, and Mr Maxwell has surmounted it triumphantly. Will Mrs Ward allow me to felicitate her upon her pupil?"

"Oh, sir!" I cried, but faultered and almost wept, for I perceived at last the reason of the change in Mr Maxwell. He was my pupil no longer.

CHAPTER XII.

A PROJECT.

BELVIDERE-HOUSE, *June ye 3rd*, 1779.

There is something excessively irksome about the long weary days of the hot weather. The ignorant observer, contemplating Mrs Hastings and myself robed in the finest muslins, perpetually fanned by obsequious attendants and stretched upon Chinese couches of bamboo, might imagine us in the enjoyment of the most extreme luxury, if he knew nothing of the lassitude and discomfort caused by the heat and the lack of exertion. The only tolerable period in the twenty-four hours is that from sunset to sunrise; and why we don't follow the example of the French, and turn night into day, I can't pretend to say. As it is, we contrive to exist, I may say, by the help of the early morning ride and the evening drive, both taken during the hours when the sun's rays are mercifully withdrawn. Returning from our morning excursion, there is time merely to bathe and enjoy a brief interval of repose before the second breakfast, which is taken in company. The meal over, Mr Hastings and his gentlemen (excepting the aid-du-camp detailed to remain in attendance on Mrs Hastings) take horse or palanqueen for Calcutta, all in the lightest possible garments, wearing coat and breeches of yellow country silk,[1] nankeen, or white dimity, and often dispensing altogether with waistcoats. The two or three hours that follow are endurable enough. When Mrs Hastings has given her orders to the head-servants, and dictated to the aid-

[1] Probably tussore.

du-camp or to me any billets she may desire sent off, I take out my work-box, and the young gentleman reads aloud from some improving volume. My patroness has little fancy for sewing, but her remarks upon the book read are frequently of the most just and illuminating description.

It is the hours after tiffen (at which I can rarely touch anything but bread and fruit, though Mrs Hastings and the aid-du-camp are usually able to satisfy a hearty appetite upon cold meat), that I find so monstrous trying. It is considered proper to devote them to seclusion and repose, so that the young gentleman, after enquiring Mrs Hastings' commands, retires to his own quarters, and my patroness and I to our couches. But sleep is not always to be enjoyed at pleasure, and there is an end even to Mrs Hastings' jewels, though they are displayed before us two or three times a-week; and the achievements of the taylors working in another apartment are soon examined, and commended or blamed. My desire would be to devote these unprofitable hours to study; but the venetian blinds are hermetically closed to exclude the hot air, and further darkened by *tattys* of fragrant grass, kept continually wet by servants outside, so that even the ray of light accorded in the morning to my sewing can't be permitted. Moreover, my patroness still preserves her distrust of female learning, the native vigour of her own mind rendering the knowledge gained from books unnecessary to her, and it don't please her to see me occupied with any work of a learned appearance from the library Mr Hastings has been good enough to open to me. Hence I find it well to be content with the books obtained from the circulating library, which the gentlemen who go into Calcutta are most obliging in exchanging for us; but the quality of these leaves something to be desired, since they have mostly been brought out as a speculation by the mates or pursers of the Indiamen, and are of the sort recommended by the London booksellers as "light summer reading," suitable for visitors to Bath and Tunbridge Wells. In studies of this kind, and in desultory conversation, perhaps interrupted with a slight doze, from which one awakes with a sensation of actual suffocation to discover that the bearer or eyah with the fan is also fallen asleep, the time

passes until it's necessary to dress for dinner and prepare to welcome the gentlemen.

A further period of repose heralds the hour for tea, of which the company partake in the varendar, starting afterwards on an excursion by land or water. If the latter, the Governor-General's budgerow (which is politely styled the budgerow of budgerows) is attended by other decorated vessels, and carries either Mr Hastings' own band of musick or one of those belonging to the military at Barrackpore, so that our ears are saluted with agreeable sounds as the boats labour up the stream or drift down with the current. Should a jaunt on land be preferred, a sufficient number of vehicles, either whiskeys, phaetons, or buggys, is at hand, and, preceded by mossoljees and running footmen, we drive into Calcutta and join the fashionable throng on the Course, where everybody and everything is smothered up with dust, but the language of compliment and gallantry flows freely without taking account of this drawback. It has occurred to me more than once that it's worth while enduring the heat of the day to experience the refreshing coolness of the return drive, when the fact that you're wearing the thinnest of muslins at length becomes credible, and the gentle breeze plays upon your face and neck. Looking at an illustrated History of England in Mr Hastings' library t'other day, I thought that we females ought to be grateful for the modes of the present age, and this though in England, and even in the cold weather here, I have often grudged the time spent in folding and pinning a handkerchief or adjusting a pair of mittens. In the hot season nobody wears either handkerchief or mittens, rejoicing in the low-cut gown and elbow-sleeves happily universal, and I wondered what had been our fate were we condemned to the close ruffs and long sleeves of the æra of Queen Elizabeth.

This, then, is our manner of life, unless an invitation is received to dine with Mr Barwell, Mr Livius, or any of the other gentlemen who possess garden-houses here; or a picnic-party is devised to visit some agreeable sylvan scene, where a genteel entertainment is provided *al fresco*. Moreover, not all our days are solitary, for Mrs Hastings is often pleased to invite one lady or another to visit her,—an invitation invariably accepted with

gratitude, as much from the desire to inspect the superb objects of taste and beauty with which this house is filled, as because no prior invitation can be allowed to over-ride one from the Governor-General's lady. It is to one of these visits that I owe my present leisure for writing, since Lady Impey is now stretched upon a couch drawn up close to that of Mrs Hastings, and pouring into her ear all the scandal of the settlement. Of this scandal there's no end, and its bitterness is beyond belief, every lady being able to recount the latest news even of the unhappy Mrs Grand, who is retired to her parents' abode at Chandernagore, though there's not one of them would be seen speaking to her. That these recitals are agreeable to Mrs Hastings I can't believe; her mind is too noble and her understanding too elevated for this; but she is tolerant of them on the plea that as the female head of the settlement she must know what is going on in it.

I fear I have wrote much to-day in a captious and discontented strain, but Mrs Hastings has been teazing me—I am ashamed to use such a word in relation to my patroness, but there's no other—on a subject that affects me very nearly. Since it's now over two years since my dear Mr Ward's removal left me the most desolate of women, she importunes me incessantly to emerge from the retirement I had promised myself should be perpetual, and also to alter my style of dress.

"I ask for no violent changes," she said to me the day before yesterday; "but pray, child, do me de favour to lay aside dat hideous close cap, which hides all your hair. What you must suffer from de heat is inconceivable. Den, if you wish to please me, you'll wear de gown I have bid my taylors put in hand for you—white gauze sprigged with silver—and a laced cap with a lilac ribbon—well, a purple ribbon, since you're so disobliging—and attend me to de Governor-General's entertainment on de King's Birthday."

"Oh, pray, dear madam!" I cried.

"But yes, I say. You intend to oblige me?"

"Oh, dearest madam, pray excuse me this. Must I be snatched from the safe obscurity I have enjoyed under your

protection, and be subjected once more to the tormenting assiduities of the Calcutta gentlemen?"

"Such safe obscurity dat dey say I keep my Hester hid because I am afraid of her," said Mrs Hastings.

"If anybody but Mrs Hastings had repeated that, ma'am, I should have laughed it to scorn."

"You haf near ten years de advantage of me in age," says my patroness, "but dat's not de question. I don't chuse Mr Francis or anybody should say dose things of me. I have respected your seclusion long enough, and I beg you won't disappoint me about next Saturday. I have set my heart on your attendance."

But my resolution proved less pliable than she expected, and the matter was argued between us with some heat, the weather having rendered us both more difficult than usual. At last, seeing that Mrs Hastings was growing seriously displeased, I asked her leave to consult with my dear Mrs Fraser, who was to spend the next day at Belvidere, and to this my patroness was pleased to assent, saying that Mrs Fraser was an excellent good woman, and sufficiently discerning to give me wise advice. I had hoped, I must say, to find my charming friend ranged on my side, but to my dismay she adopted the part of Mrs Hastings as soon as I approached the subject.

"Sure it's your clear duty," she said, "to oblige your kind patroness, who has indulged you in secluding yourself so long, even at some sacrifice of your own convenience."

"My sweetest Mrs Fraser knows I wouldn't grudge any degree of attendance on Mrs Hastings," I said. "My fear is only that my appearance in a general company will renew those civilities on the part of the gentlemen which I have so happily escaped of late."

"I fear you can't hope to escape them longer," said my dear friend. "Only as a member of Mrs Hastings' family could you have succeeded in remaining single so long. If in England a single woman is held either a pitiable or a contemptible object, in Bengall she's a creature impossible to exist. The sudden vicissitudes caused by death and the break-up of families tend perpetually to deprive her of her refuge, so that she's forced to seek the asylum that marriage alone can afford her. But sure

this prospect can have no terrors for my Mrs Ward, in her advantageous situation? The protection of Mrs Hastings will secure her from being incommoded by any disagreeable suitor, and she can consult her own taste in her choice."

"But since I desire no choice, ma'am? My sole wish is to remain in my present situation, and seek to please my patroness."

"But if Mrs Hastings refuse to be pleased in any way but this? Come, my Hester, if I may style you so, resolve at least to go into company with a mind unbiassed, and to weigh the merits of the gentlemen who approach you. Our kind Mr Ward would never have desired you to remain all your life secluded for his sake, and your patroness is acting in the kindest, as well as the wisest way for you."

"Ah, if my charming Mrs Fraser would but understand that I desire only to remain in that seclusion, unnoticed, but not, I trust, unuseful!" I cried. "I have felt myself of some service this last cold weather——"

"In completing the education of an aid-du-camp?" asked Mrs Fraser, smiling. "Well, my love, I agree with you there. The young gentleman is improved in an extraordinary degree."

"Why, yes, ma'am—so much improved that he despises his instructress. I could laugh—if it didn't wound me so deeply—to observe the haughty air with which he now condescends to converse with me. Now that he's become a man of fashion he has no more use for me."

"This is excessively surprising!" said Mrs Fraser. "I'll confess I had not thought so badly of the young gentleman. But my Mrs Ward an't surely at a loss to know how to resent such unhandsome behaviour?"

"It an't unhandsome, ma'am," I cried, already ashamed of my accusation. "It's—it's—I can't find any reason for the disagreeable way it touches me, unless—— Oh, ma'am, I'll own it,—though I had never dared to make such a confession to Mrs Hastings, or to anybody less patient with my follies than my dear Mrs Fraser,—my trouble is that whereas the gentleman has been used to obey any suggestion of mine without question or hesitation, he now receives it as advice merely, and pauses to

give it becoming consideration in his mind before complying with it."

"This is treasonable indeed!" cried Mrs Fraser, restraining, as I could perceive, a smile with difficulty. "Does my dear Mrs Ward recollect that there's plenty of people would tell her she was exceeding fortunate to find a gentleman accord any consideration at all to her advice? Is it that she grudges Mr Maxwell the having a mind of his own?"

"Why, no, ma'am—merely his withdrawing from me the privilege of guiding it," I said, and laughed at my own foolishness, but was still not far from tears. "What a wicked discontented creature I am!" I cried, "and what must my charming Mrs Fraser think of me? Pray, ma'am, imbue me with a little of your philosophy. I declare I'm so vapourish that if I were another I could pity myself!"

"Indeed, I have done that often," says she, "and that not in the more terrifying and perilous portions of my life so much as when I found my ease and prosperity threatened by two or three small troubles at once. Will it be any comfort to my Mrs Ward if I tell her that, looking back on those days, Sylvia Fraser finds Sylvia Freyne to have been too often an intolerable fool?"

"Oh no, dear madam, never intolerable!" I cried.

"Well, then, a tolerable fool, if that's any better. Who knows but in a year or two you may wish to recall this time that you find so disagreeable? I fear there's others may, at any rate."

"You mean Mr Hastings, ma'am? I believe it's one of the reasons of my discontent, that I know so much less here of what's going on than when we are in Calcutta. With Mr Hastings coming in fresh from Council one must hear something of what's doing, but now he very good-naturedly collects all the gossip of the settlement to bring out to us, and forgets his own uneasiness."

"Indeed, I fear Mrs Ward and I are alike in belonging to that class of *petticoat politicians* which Mr Francis holds in such dislike," said Mrs Fraser.

"Has Mr Francis favoured you also with that nickname, ma'am?"

"Not for some time past. Mr Francis is not of late an intimate of Mr Fraser's. 'Twas no private pique parted them"—I had looked up, knowing that Mr Fraser had been so unfortunate as in his own house to overhear Mr Francis describe him as a *chuckle-headed tarpauling*—"but the sad affair at Mr Grand's. Mr Fraser would not suffer himself to be convinced at first, but after the trial he could doubt no longer—at least, so far as Mr Francis was concerned."

"Mr Francis is more than ever incensed against the Judges since they cast him in such monstrous damages," said I, "and, indeed, they have few friends of late. An't it strange, ma'am, that public opinion, which supported them in so many overbearing acts, should turn against them on a matter in which they were in the right? Mr Hastings considers they had no power to grant a trial by jury to the fellow Creassy when he demanded it, and yet the whole settlement is ringing with *the right of every Briton, trial by his peers*, and so on."

"Yet Mr Hastings don't support the Judges?"

"Only in that particular, ma'am. It has been his aim to hold himself aloof from both parties, in the hope of mediating between them; but the petition signed without his knowledge by Mr Motte and so many of his supporters, and even by some of the gentlemen of his family here, has placed him in a difficult situation. He had hoped to prevail on Sir Elijah, by means of their old friendship, to abate some of his more extravagant demands, and on the Council to offer some genteel concessions; but he fears the Judges are now so resolved to heighten their own consequence that they won't yield a single point. Already they regard him as their declared adversary. But here's tiffen."

And having wandered sufficiently far from our original topic, we proceeded to attend Mrs Hastings in the dining-parlour.

BELVIDERE-HOUSE, *June ye 7th.*

The day of festivity is over, having been ushered in with the firing of great guns from the New Fort and several volleys of small arms, and concluded by the grand entertainment given by the Governor-General at the Court-house to the ladies and gentlemen of the settlement. The great hall was finely illumin-

ated, the band of musick the best that could be obtained, and the refreshments (now resigned by Mrs Hastings to the direction of Cawntoo Bobboo, the Governor-General's banyan) beyond reproach. I had never even imagined a scene so brilliant as that presented when the hall was filled with the representatives of the Government, the military, and the Service, with their ladies, the whole company decorated with all the taste and magnificence that art could suggest or wealth provide. After partaking of an elegant collation, and enjoying the pleasures of social intercourse and the agreeable strains of musick, the assembly gave themselves up to the delights of the dance, Mrs Hastings opening the ball with Colonel Morgan, the Commandant of Barrackpore.

Owing to the excessive heat of the weather, hoops were worn only by Mrs Hastings and the other ladies who were to dance in the minuet, and I never felt so grateful for my inferior situation as now, since it permitted me to appear in an undress. Never have I beheld the splendour of my revered patroness so conspicuous, for such a blaze of light was diffused by the diamonds which ornamented her bodice, her petticoat, and her unpowdered tresses, that Mr Francis, on first encountering her, affected to shade his eyes with his hand from the radiance, and enquired in well-feigned alarm whether he had misread his ticket, and appeared in full dress when he should have come in a masquerade habit, since he perceived before him the *Genius of Golconda*. Yet even a greater triumph was achieved when, the minuet ended, Mrs Hastings retired to change her gown, and returned in the most ravishing undress imaginable, of the finest China gauze, painted with flowers in the most delicate tints, and ornamented slightly with a French silk lace. I could have smiled to hear the elderly officers near me exclaim "Monstrous fine woman!" with all the ardour of youth, while the young gentlemen who affect *maccaroni* airs were so far startled out of their fashionable languor as to contemplate Mrs Hastings with their eyes instead of their eye-glasses, and to murmur "*Divina! Squisita!*" with a genuine admiration. Gratifying as was this general testimony to my patroness's appearance, I found it less affecting than the demeanour of Mr Hastings, who exhibited throughout the evening that sympathetic pleasure in his lady's

triumphs which is the true mark of the attached spouse. Distinguished among the fine clothes of the other gentlemen by the plain but rich dress he always affects, he was at hand at the conclusion of every dance to lead Mrs Hastings to her seat, to offer her a glass of orgeat or a handkerchief, or to fan her with his own hand, regardless of the amusement his attentions produced in the bosoms of that portion of the company that takes its cue from Mr Francis.

Nor is Mrs Hastings' own goodness of heart inferior to that of her spouse, since she released me from my attendance after the first dance, and bade me enjoy myself as I pleased. Willing to show her that if I had been undesirous to oblige her at first, I could yield with a good grace, I went through a country dance with Captain Palmer, the Governor-General's military secretary; but not having danced for so long, found myself most absurdly distressed after it, through the heat and the exertion. For the next dance I was engaged to Mr Maxwell; but he, seeing my situation, suggested (very good-naturedly, as I thought) a turn in the gardens instead, and without waiting for my reply, fetched me a scarf and handed me out. Finding an agreeable arbour unoccupied, I tottered to a seat there, and the young gentleman brought me an ice. Being now somewhat recovered, I was able to discover a pleasure in the beauty of the night and the charming appearance of the gardens, which were illuminated with coloured lamps. My spirits returning, I was beating time with my foot to the tune which was being played by the band in the Court-house, when I was suddenly made aware that Mr Maxwell was in the act of making me an offer of his hand and heart.

"Alas!" I cried, heartily vexed, when I had awoke to the meaning of his words, "I expected this would happen."

"So I was assured, ma'am," said he, very coolly. "I am glad not to have disappointed you."

"You mistake me, sir," I cried with a good deal of vivacity. "I was not referring to you in particular, but to the general inconvenience I looked for at the hands of the gentlemen. And do I owe this piece of *assurance* also on your part to the General's aids-du-camp?"

"Why, hardly, ma'am, unless it was their words first opened my eyes to see that the lady I regarded as a divinity was also a woman."

"Upon my honour, sir, you're very frank! Am I expected to feel grateful for this lower view?"

"I'm unfortunate in my explanations, ma'am. A different view, if you please, but not a lower—in my eyes, at least."

I regarded him in astonishment, for the coolness of his tone was beyond belief. "What am I to think of you, sir?" I cried. "Prompted, as you own, from without, you make this proposition to me without the slightest apparent concern whether I receive it favourably or not."

"Pardon me, ma'am," said he quickly. "I had not the least anticipation of a favourable reply."

"Indeed!" I said. I could think of nothing else to say. "Then I wish with all my heart I had punished you by an instant acceptance," I added at last.

"Pray don't hesitate to repair the omission, ma'am. A benefit is no less welcome because unexpected."

But by this time I could no longer conceal my mortification. "Sir," I cried, rising, "if you invited me hither to insult me——" My voice failed me. "What I have done to provoke such a behaviour I don't know——"

"Have the goodness to sit down again, madam," says Mr Maxwell, quite pale. "As Heaven's my witness, I had no thought of insulting you, unless it's an insult for a man to ask a lady to become his wife. I seem to have set about it the wrong way, I'll confess, and for that I ask your pardon."

"I spoke hastily, sir," I said, trembling, but perceiving that I had judged too harshly. "Pray accept my assurance that what you desire is impossible, and let us quit the topic."

"And pray, ma'am, why impossible?" he asked, with the most disagreeable persistence in the world. Had I not told him that I desired the topic closed?

"Why—why—because it is impossible, sir. Having been bereaved of the best husband in the world, it's my intention to consecrate the remainder of life to his memory."

"When you speak as though you were well advanced in age,

ma'am, you'll allow me to remind you that you are two years younger than myself."

"Mrs Hastings told you that!" I cried, perceiving, what I had already suspected, my patroness's part in the affair. "Your proposition is monstrous flattering, sir. Did it indeed require Mrs Hastings to spur the lagging ardour which the General's gentlemen had raised?"

"Mrs Ward is for once unjust. Mrs Hastings divined the secret which I had thought hid in my own breast, and recommended me to open it to you, saying you was so much accustomed to such matters that you wouldn't be offended. I followed her advice, not expecting a favourable issue, as I have said, but conceiving it wiser to declare on what footing I stood."

"If the situation of a rejected suitor be so desirable——" I began.

"Pardon me, ma'am, an expectant suitor."

"But I told you 'twas impossible!" I cried.

"Precisely, ma'am—for the present. You have honoured me for near a year with your friendship in the character of a youth who sought to learn all you could teach him. In the future I shall hope to commend myself to you in the character of a man who has learnt your lesson, and trusts to teach you his."

"But if I don't wish to learn it?" I cried.

"I don't despair, ma'am. Perhaps you will some day."

"Do you threaten me, sir?"

"I would fain think I was offering you an agreeable prospect, ma'am."

"I can't believe you serious, sir—you speak so calmly," I said, leaving the question, but more perplexed than ever.

"My life must prove my seriousness, ma'am. I only ask this—if Mrs Ward should ever need service of any sort, let her demand it of her Maxwell, and judge him by the event."

"Oh, sir," I said, much moved by his solemnity, "you almost make me wish it were otherwise, but—it's impossible."

"That's for me to prove, ma'am," said he, and attended me back into the hall, where I danced another dance with young Mr Markham, and then felt absolutely unable to do more, thereby rousing the raillery of my Lady Chambers, whom I

heard promising an eleventh dance conditionally on her finding herself in spirits after the tenth.

Mrs Hastings took no notice of my return beyond rallying me upon my laziness; but when we were returned to her house, where we were to spend the Sunday, she hardly waited until her dressing-room was reached to demand whether I had anything to tell her.

"Oh, madam," I cried, all the surprise and mortification of the evening returning upon me, "you have used your poor Hester cruelly. If you was tired of my attendance, had it not been more in accordance with your own kind heart to tell me so, rather than to incite Mr Maxwell to try and rid you of me?"

"He needed monstrous little inciting," says my patroness. "But come, since you prefer de word, is he to rid me of you?"

"I knew it!" I cried. "No, ma'am, the poor creature you reject won't afflict an unfortunate gentleman with her useless self."

"Hester, you talk foolishness," said Mrs Hastings, with great good-humour. "Dis means, I suppose, dat you've refused de poor man? Well, den, de matter's at an end, though I take it very disobliging in you, when you know how I love a wedding."

"Would you have me marry Mr Maxwell to gratify your taste in that way, ma'am?"

"No, child, no,—to gratify yourself and de honest fellow. And I had planned all your wedding-clothes, and chose de very piece of muslin for your gown! Well, well, dat's over."

"Oh, ma'am," I cried again, "what do you take me for? Imagine—which Heaven forbid—that you were ever so unhappy as to be bereaved of Mr Hastings, would you seek another spouse?"

"Dere's no comparison in de two cases," said my patroness, with considerable warmth. "You are young, and it's natural and right for young creatures to marry."

"Why not say at once that you wish me to quit you, ma'am?" I cried, weeping. "One word had told me your desire, and spared us this cruel discourse. I'll go to-morrow."

"Dat you won't," says Mrs Hastings in a firm voice. "If you had waited, you had heard me tell my plan for you and

Maxwell, how you should haf apartments of your own both here and at Belvidere, and live in our family as before. But pray dry your tears. I hear Mr Hastings coming."

But my sobs were not so easily stilled, and when Mr Hastings entered he found me bowed on a couch in great disorder, while his lady adjured me with considerable sternness to be calm. To his surprised enquiry Mrs Hastings deigned to afford no reply, and I was forced to get out the confession that I had believed my patroness desirous to be rid of me.

"Come, come," says Mr Hastings, "this is foolishness indeed! Why, all Calcutta knows that Mrs Hastings would be lost without her Mrs Ward. If I ask who directed the servants in garnishing a supper-table, or who mended my ruffles, or who devised the decoration in diamonds on Mrs Hastings' gown, or wrote out half the billets for her concert of musick, the answer is always the same—Mrs Ward! How could Mrs Hastings do without her? Come, my Marian, embrace your friend, and assure her that so long as your family exists, there's a place in it for her."

Taking Mrs Hastings by the hand, he led her towards me, and as I rose to throw myself at her feet, she anticipated me, embracing me with all the kindness imaginable, and bidding me not show myself so foolish in future. Mr Hastings adding a genteel compliment, I was dismissed, but I slept little that night.

CHAPTER XIII

A TRAVELLER.

CALCUTTA, *Oct. ye 25th*, 1779.

When I attended Mrs Hastings back to Allypore after the Birthday ball I imagined myself destined to hear no more of Mr Maxwell and his hopes, unless perhaps from the lips of the gentleman himself; but in this I was mistaken. It happened,

in the most unfortunate way possible, that we were seen quitting the arbour and re-entering the ballroom by no less a person than Mr Francis, who perceiving, either from our aspect or by means of some disagreeable faculty of divination peculiar to himself, what had passed between us, experienced no hesitation in entertaining all Calcutta with the intelligence that the insatiable widow had added another to the list of her conquests. Put thus, the accusation may appear not unflattering, but Mr Francis is a master of the art of relating a tale in such a manner as to throw ridicule on everybody that figures in it. Poor Mr Maxwell was condemned already, like every man who has the fortune to be rejected, as though 'twas said, "'Tis a poor creature indeed, since even a woman will have nothing to do with him!" As for me, it was hinted that I had laboured all the winter to bring the unfortunate young gentleman to my feet, with the avowed purpose of demolishing his hopes at last; and I believe that among his intimates the wretch even exhibited me in the odious light of one who found happiness only in pastimes of this sort. The gossip of the settlement could not fail in penetrating before long to Mr Hastings' ear, and connecting it with the disorder in which he had seen me on the Birthday night, he enquired of his lady as to its truth. Of this I was made aware by his taking an early opportunity to inform me very civilly that while he could desire nothing better for Mr Maxwell than such a marriage in a few years' time, he could not sufficiently admire my discretion in refusing to listen to him while he occupied his present dependent situation. I endeavoured to explain that my refusal had not been dictated by any consideration of the sort; but Mr Hastings, appearing not to hear me, went on to say that he had rebuked the young gentleman sharply for his precipitancy, and now trusted that I would not trouble myself further about the matter. I could have wished to point out that the unfortunate Mr Maxwell would have displayed no precipitancy had he not been stimulated by Mrs Hastings, but the Governor-General added that he had desired his lady not to make up marriages in future for his aids-du-camp without acquainting him of her intentions, so that I saw he discerned her hand in it.

Since then I have been glad enough to escape the smiles and

whispers of Calcutta by means of the frequent excursions on which I have attended Mrs Hastings, paying visits to my Lady Coote at Ghyretty (this was before the General went up the river to examine into the situation of the country garrisons); to Mr and Mrs Ross, the Dutch agent and his lady, at Chinchura; and to Hooghley, where Mrs Motte (formerly our amiable and charming Miss Touchet) has been established in the best house in the place by her attentive spouse, who is hardly less amiable and charming than herself. To my extreme delight, Mrs Hastings has forgot her disappointment with regard to me in making up a match for young Mr Ramus, Lady Day's brother, with Miss Vernet, the daughter of a most respectable lady, widow to a former chief of the Dutch factory, living at Chinchura. In this she has been so successful (the ceremony is to take place very shortly) that I fear Sir John Day considers due respect has not been shown to him in hurrying the matter on without his knowledge. As for Mr Maxwell, he has accepted very composedly both the ridicule of his acquaintance and the rebuke of his patron, and continues to make his court to me (though the method is so delicate that unless my eyes had been opened I should scarce recognise its object) with extreme modesty and good-humour. And this—whatever Mr Francis may say—an't my fault, for having once given the young gentleman his answer, it stands to reason that I can't perpetually make myself particular by avoiding him.

Now that we are returned to Calcutta, and the gaieties of the cold season are commencing (the races, following close on the native holidays, take place this week), I am able, in the interval of attending Mrs Hastings to the entertainments she honours with her presence, to renew my acquaintance with public affairs. These are less flourishing than all lovers of their country would desire to see them. Moodajee Bounceloe having definitely rejected the propositions which General Goddard was instructed to make to him, and the Maratta Nannah Furneess demanding impossible conditions as a preliminary of peace, Mr Hastings has been forced to recognise his endeavours to be vain, and to see that war must ensue. 'Tis still his hope to retain the ruler of Berar as an actual, if not a professed friend, despite the

ominous rumours which reach us, by way of Madrass, to the effect that Nizam Ally, the Soubah of the Deccan, who is reputed the most subtle politician in India since the death of Maharaja Nundocomar, is preparing a great league for the destruction of the British power, uniting with his own forces those of Hyder, of Moodajee, and the innumerable hordes of the Maratta Confederation. The minor Rajas of the central portion of Indostan, whom Mr Hastings had designed to unite in an alliance with us, and thus form a counterpoise to the Maratta power, have been deterred by the reports studiously spread by our enemies of the defeats of our forces in America, the dissensions in the Bengall Council, and the probable change in the Government, and by the disgrace attaching to the British arms since the shameful affair of Worgaum. The utmost possible to Mr Hastings is to use every means to avoid adding to the number of our declared foes, and he has addressed the strongest recommendations in his power to the Madrass Committee urging them to maintain peace with Hyder, and warning them of their danger, since they must infallibly be the first attacked should the fierce potentate of Mysore carry out his reputed plans. Equally unfortunate in dealing with Hyder as the Bombay Committee with the Marattas, the Madrass gentlemen, having doubly irritated the tyrant by capturing the French settlement of Mahé from under his protection, and violating his territory in marching troops through it to attack Nizam Ally's brother Bassaulut Jung and obtain possession of the Guntoor Circar, think it well to send an embassador with a view to ascertain his intentions. The most suitable person they can discover is a worthy divine by the name of Mr Swartz, a German missionary; and this pious and venerable character they have despatched to endeavour to placate the enraged sovereign, sending him, in the words of Scripture, as a lamb in the midst of wolves.

While affairs outside the Presidency thus wear a uniformly sombre complexion, they are no brighter within it. The discontent against the Supreme Court, which was evidenced by a public testification of disapproval so long ago as June, and confirmed by the petition promoted by Mr Motte and other respectable persons, increases in proportion as the arrogance of the

Judges becomes more unbridled. The acting Justice of the Peace is Mr Hyde—a person of the most violent and unrestrained temper, and well known to have suffered at one time from a disorder of the brain—and to him is committed the privilege of setting in motion the forces of the law. He is upheld in his most extravagant assumptions by the other Judges, and Mr Hastings is frequently cut to the heart to perceive Sir Elijah Impey obstinately deaf to the remonstrances addressed to him in the name of a friendship of five-and-twenty years, so eager is the Chief-Justice to support every action and every claim of his brother lawyer. At length the Council, for once united in opposition to a common foe, have taken a resolute step on the recommendation of Sir John Day. The Raja of Cossijurra, on being summoned for a debt by his Calcutta agent, Cossinaut Bobboo, has been advised by the Council that the jurisdiction of the Court does not extend to him, as being neither an inhabitant of the settlement nor a servant of the Company, and desired to pay no heed to the proceedings. There the matter rests at the present.

To crown all the misfortunes of this unhappy period, our existence appears to be forgot by our masters at home, and this oblivion, for which we should often have been grateful, is now likely to be fraught with the most disagreeable consequences. The commissions both of the Governor-General and the Council are due to expire at the end of this month, being five years from the arrival of the new Councillors in Bengall, and nothing has been heard as to their renewal or supercession. This involves the most cruel injustice to Mr Hastings, who may at any moment, by the arrival of a pacquet, find himself again in a private situation, with a triumphant rival seated in his chair. The sole comfort for Mrs Hastings and myself lies in the fact that the suspense is equally tormenting to Mr Francis. In July he conceived himself certain of succeeding, letters from the Court of Directors being arrived in the *Swallow* without a single mention of Mr Hastings, or so much as the compliment of a cover addressed to him, so that Mr Francis appeared to look for an instant submission on his part. But Mr Hastings, scorning the suggested baseness, remained firm in the resolution to retain the

chair to the very last moment that it was legally his, and thus to provide as far as possible for the carrying-out of his political measures. Nor did he consent even to submit the question, whether the Governor-General and Council could legally continue to act after the expiration of the five years, to the decision of Sir John Day, refusing to erect a third supreme authority in a province already distracted by the presence of two. Regardless of the possible penalties he may incur, he continues in the possession of the power entrusted to him by Providence and his country. Mr Barwell displays the same constancy of mind, and the poor General, who was in a state of the most cruel indecision between the claims of the actual and the possible heads of the Government, is safe up the country.

It would hardly be conceived that at this period of difficulty and distraction a person could be found willing to offer the fullest advice imaginable to the Governor-General in every department of the administration, but Calcutta is just now favoured with the presence of an individual of precisely this cast. I can't even grudge him his own high opinion of himself, since he has afforded a few moments' entertainment to Mr Hastings, such as he seldom enjoys. A week or two ago my patroness and I chanced to be sitting alone in the afternoon, and for a wonder, occupied with our needlework, when Mr Hastings came in smiling.

"My Marian," he said in an eager but subdued voice, "I have the strangest creature to present to you—the greatest oddity in the world! 'Tis the man that got poor Padra Yate captured and imprisoned by the French, only for being in his company—that came up the river with Price in August. Shore brought him to my lever,[1] you'll remember, and desiring to compliment Shore, you sent him a ticket for your concert. Now he's done me the honour to make me a formal visit, and I am promised to ride with Sir John in five minutes. Pray smooth the fellow's ruffled feelings for me, and get rid of him. Don't permit him to weary you. He carries with him a pile of writings as big as a church."

"Writings!" cried Mrs Hastings. "Of what sort?"

"Letters, my Marian—directed to my Lord North and my

[1] The old-fashioned spelling of *levee*.

Lord Stormont and your husband, among others. The oddest thing about the man is that he don't seem even to design to send them off—only to keep them to read to himself and anybody else he can induce to listen to him. He desired to read 'em to me, but when I discovered he had a complete plan for revising the government of India and establishing our policy with the French and the country powers on the only sound basis, I recollected that Sir John must not be kept waiting. Will my elegant Marian do me the favour of at once placating and dismissing the creature?"

His lady assenting, Mr Hastings fetched in a short, broad-shouldered person of a very swarthy complexion, and presenting him to us with all his accustomed affability, assured him that even the fear of inconveniencing the Advocate-General had not torn him away had he not been conscious that he left the visitor in far more agreeable company than his own. The gentleman, whose name appeared to be Macintosh, received the excuse very amiably, and accepted of a seat near Mrs Hastings. Scarcely had he seated himself, however, when he leaped up again to look at her tambour-work.

"Pardon me, ma'am, but if you held the hook differently—excuse me, *so*—with your hand over it instead of under, I'm convinced you'd find it an advantage."

"La, sir! what a shocking awkward appearance it would have!" cried Mrs Hastings, amazed at his assurance.

"But consider, ma'am, how much more power you'd gain over the hook! I'm not often wrong, I'll assure you, and there an't many subjects on which my advice is not worth listening to."

"Indeed, sir, I understand from Mr Hastings dat you're good enough to allow even de chief characters of de age to profit by it."

"The Governor-General is very good, ma'am. It's a matter for deep regret that he was unable to spare me an hour or two to-day, to listen to two or three considerations I have drawn up. In a space comparatively brief I have proved not merely that the entire system on which the British dominion in India is and has been governed is wrong, but that it can be totally reformed with very little trouble. If you'll permit it, I'll——"

"Oh, pray, sir!" cried Mrs Hastings, seeing him unfasten a sort of portfolio he had brought into the room with him, "be so good as to give us de scheme merely in outline to-day. Anoder day you shall fill in de details. We must not keep you from your friends."

"Madam, I never subject my schemes to the risk of misconception by submitting them in outline," was the reply. "Ah, this is the letter I was seeking. I need not trouble a female of your penetration, ma'am, with the preliminary considerations, since your experience of India must long ago have revealed to you the candid, unaspiring, and contented nature of the Hindoos, and convinced you there's no race on earth so grateful and inoffensive, or possessing quicker feelings of right and wrong." Mrs Hastings directed at me a glance full of incredulity and resignation. "Therefore I will plunge at once into my profound scheme for a complete revolution, based upon the principles of justice and humanity, the first point being to reverse every the slightest act of every British authority in India up to this time."

Thus he introduced his subject, and after a commencement so ingenuous I was not surprised to find him declaring that the Company had forfeited its privileges and ought to have 'em withdrawn; that the sovereign of Britain should restore Shaw Allum, the ineffective Mogul Emperor, to his throne, and, in alliance with him, subjugate the rest of India, leaving the conquered states in the enjoyment of a sort of subordinate liberty. The Marattas, having been subdued, were to be protected against Hyder Ally, who was to be conquered in his turn, and peace and legality were to be secured by a sort of Diet or Congress, at which delegates from all the states were to meet annually at Dhelly, under the presidency of the Mogul. Opposition on the part of the French and Dutch was to be discounted by seizing all their possessions in the East Indies out of hand, while the Portugueze territories were to be purchased, whether their owners desired it or not. When the gentleman had gone thus far, Mrs Hastings suddenly rose.

"We are infinitely obliged to you, sir, for your polite lecture, but we are supping abroad, and to our sorrow we can't now

listen further. Pray, how many years have you spent in India, dat you an't afraid to undertake so prodigious a task?"

"Why, ma'am," he replied, excessively gratified, "not one. I landed first at Negapatnam not four months ago, and owing to the uncommon rains, I have had little commerce yet with the gentlemen here. Indeed, if you'll believe me, the greater part of my scheme was drawn up before I had set foot in India at all."

"Indeed?" said Mrs Hastings. "Now dat is precisely what I should have thought."

Nov. ye 29th.

During the past month we have seen Mr Macintosh frequently, since he has been constant in attending the Governor-General's levers and every entertainment for which he could obtain a ticket, and has beset Mr Hastings perpetually with an adulation such as can only be styled servile. That this affecting attachment was not wholly disinterested became evident when it appeared that the gentleman was anxious to receive the charge of the Company's homeward pacquet, thus obtaining a free passage either to the Cape or Suez by the *Swallow*, according as the pacquet was to be sent by sea or overland, and thence taking entire charge of the letters, and receiving either a second free passage from the Cape home, or a present of two thousand rupees for his expenses in Egypt and in traversing Europe. Nor was this all the benefit he anticipated, since a charge so respectable would qualify him to obtain a post in the Company's service, (to which he has at present no claim,) and thus return to India not as a traveller but as a resident. Mr Hastings refusing to make any promises, Mr Macintosh thought himself justified in extending his favours immediately to Mr Francis, and now pays his court to both gentlemen with an astonishing assiduity. Could I believe that Mr Francis would tolerate his reading aloud his writings, I might regard them as united in indissoluble bonds, but I can't credit that Mr Francis would be more patient than Mr Hastings, who has peremptorily declined the reading, though willing to allow the gentleman to set out his opinions in conversation. Mr Barwell has had the amiability to suffer the reading for an hour, and Mr Macintosh is vociferous in praise

of his discernment, not perceiving that the kind gentleman had set him down as a poor foolish fellow whom it were a considerate act to humour.

To-day I have derived some entertainment from Mr Macintosh, not for the first time, at Mr Ramus's, whither Mrs Hastings and I had proceeded in order to support his new-made lady in the ordeal of sitting up. As the contriver of the match, my patroness felt it incumbent upon her to afford the young couple every gratification in her power, and at the same time to endeavour to reconcile the bridegroom's relatives with the marriage. With all the fascinations which she knows so well how to exert, she conversed in the most affable manner with Mrs Vernet and Sir John Day, who attended as a particular favour to herself, and attracted about her a court of eager listeners almost superior to that which surrounded the bride. I had carried my knotting with me, and was established, very much to my mind, at the back of the apartment, when Mr Macintosh, who appeared unable to find a listener in the entire company, came and attached himself to me.

"I trust Mr Macintosh is kind enough to project a favourable report of the Calcutta community in his great work?" I said, for it's now no secret that the gentleman designs all his odd letters to appear in print.

"I must give judgment according to my conscience, ma'am," says he solemnly. "There's many things painful to an honest critic that he must yet record—such as I wouldn't shock female ears with mentioning—sad doings, indeed!" shaking his head.

"I fear you frequent ill company, sir," said I, refusing to utter the eager questions that I saw the creature was anticipating.

"Mr Macintosh sets himself to examine into the affairs of the settlement till he finds what he looks for," said Mr Maxwell, behind my chair.

"Indeed, ma'am,"—Mr Macintosh continued to address himself to me,—"I needn't look far to find an astonishing toleration even in the very highest situations of a most filthy and disgusting habit. You can't conceive my amazement when I received my ticket for Mrs Hastings' first concert to read upon it, 'Mr M. is requested to bring with him only his *houcaburdaar*.' When

I print that invitation in my book, I think it will create some surprise that the brightest ornament of a polite society could admit the houcca even to the occasions of genteel recreation."

"I an't concerned to defend the houcca," said I, "though I'll allow that the spices and sweet herbs mixed with the tobacco produce a very agreeable odour. But pray, sir, is it your custom to hold a lady up to obloquy through the very card which procured you the enjoyment of her hospitality?"

"Why, ma'am," put in Mr Maxwell, "that ticket will prove that Mr Macintosh was privileged with an entrance into polite society."

"Or will show that the society must have been polite, since Mr Macintosh exercised the privilege of entering it," said I. "But, pray, Mr Macintosh, don't look so darkly upon our poor attempts at wit. Sure there's an air of easy gaiety about an occasion of this sort that carries one away."

"Easy gaiety!" cried he, with the most contemptuous air in the world. "Ah, ma'am, how a single evening at Vauxhall would open your eyes to the absurd pretensions of this place! There's a vulgar magnificence, a species of un-British ostentation, but as for any trace of *ton*, of taste——!"

"Oh, come, sir, you must justify your words. What's wrong with such a scene as the present?"

"Why, ma'am, everything's so old-fashioned." He cast a glance at good Mrs Vernet, wearing a stiff brocade and a hoop that must have lasted her since her own wedding, and an ugly close cap on which she had lavished yards of the finest lace, merely spoiling the lace without improving the cap. "There's not a young fellow you meet but thinks to show himself a man of fashion by bringing in the words *bore* or *borish* or *boring* every two minutes. Now I'll allow that once 'twas all the *ton* in London to say a matter was a bore, but that was two years ago. And again, all your fine young gentlemen are monstrous eager to be recognised as *maccaronies*, not knowing that in all the *ton* circles *maccaronism* went out something like five years back."

"Alas!" I said, "there's something excessively mournful in this. Oblige me with some more of our crimes, sir. But here

comes my Lady Impey, attended by Captain Price. Pray, Mr Maxwell, set chairs for them, that they may share in Mr Macintosh's lamentations."

"What, Price! mad Price, as I have heard Mr Hastings call him—the commander of the Company's privateers, the commodore of the Musquitto Fleet?" cried Mr Macintosh.

"That last, sir, you've heard from Mr Francis, never from Mr Hastings," said I. "He values our good bluff captain far too highly to afflict him with such nicknames."

"Why, ma'am, I don't desire to hurt the gentleman, I'm sure. I know him well, and have been the means of instilling much useful information into his mind, but I had scarce thought him calculated to please the female taste."

"Oh, Captain Price is an excellent good friend of mine," said I, while Mr Maxwell called out, "Pray, Captain, come to an anchor here. Mr Macintosh is telling us we are five years behind the fashion, and my Lady Impey ought to hear it."

"Your servant, ma'am," says Captain Price, piloting, as he calls it, the lady to her seat, and moving it about until it was placed to her mind. "There's no man can *hold forth* on any topic under the sun better than Mr Macintosh, and that I'll swear to my dying day."

"Then, Price, my good fellow," says Mr Macintosh, in a tone of patronage, "you'll permit me to observe that in London you would just have made a highly ridiculous exhibition of yourself. Everything now is in the line of a greater simplicity of manners, and no gentleman gives himself the trouble to see whether a lady is easy—all that is gone out. He *dumps* her down upon a seat, if he do even so much as that, and goes off."

"Oh, you relieve my mind!" says Lady Impey. "I feared 'twas our clothes were behind the fashion, sir. Good Captain Price will continue to make an odd exhibition of himself, I trust."

"As to that," says the Captain shrewdly, "I've observed that with some sorts of people rudeness is never out of fashion. For these several years it's all their pleasure here to throw pellets of bread one at t'other across the table, and at Dacca, four or five years back, 'twas the joints and puddings that served 'em

for missiles. But if it's plain behaviour pleases you, sir, maybe you'd affect the simplicity of manners that prevailed at this place forty or fifty years ago. Why, in those days, as I've heard an old country captain of my acquaintance tell over and over again, the Council used to meet in the hot weather wearing their night-vests and trowsers, saving your presence, ladies, with a gouglet of water and a case-bottle of good old arrack on the table, ready for the secretary to make punch. When once they were debating so hot and hard that they couldn't bring themselves to break off, some one suggested that each gentleman should send home for his dinner, and in a trice there was seven legs of mutton and seven suet dumplings smoking on the table before the seven Councillors. No larded turkey and chocolate tart then, Mr Macintosh. 'Twas plain food and plenty of it in those days."

"Oh, horrid!" murmured Lady Impey.

"And how much more worthy of their country were the men of that æra!" says Mr Macintosh. "This is a sad degenerate age!"

"The old captain I told you of would be with you there, sir. That was what he always said when he saw two or three young folks taking up the entire space of a ballroom with their silly foreign cottillions, instead of letting all the couples take the floor at once in Buttered Peas, or Lumps of Pudding, or Jack in the Green, or any other of the true Old English country dances."

"Oh dear, what nasty vulgar names!" cried Lady Impey.

"Will anybody venture to deny that the age is degenerate?" demanded Mr Macintosh. "Oblige me by observing the young buck there,—*buck* is the *ton* word for what Calcutta still styles a *maccaroni*," he explained graciously, indicating a slender young gentleman in a white satin suit embroidered in silver who was paying his respects to the bride; "I have met him often, always attired as though for a Birthday ball—save when I beheld him play Belvidera on the stage, and a sweetly pretty female he made. Tell me, pray, whether that's a fitting successor to the men who held Arcott and conquered at Plassey?"

"Why, yes, sir," was the unexpected reply of Mr Maxwell. "I have been on active service with Lieutenant Norfar, and can testify that he was always the most alert at the moment of danger, and the best comrade in a bivouack. The charge you bring is as old as the days of Horace, if not older, and I'll swear our young gentlemen will do as well as their fathers when they're put to it. Not that it don't irk me to hear some of 'em talk of having their hands washed by their bearers with lily-of-the-valley water, and drinking a dish of imperial tea and harts-horn on rising, or scolding the taylor because their new laced nightcaps an't just right."

"Pray, sir, have a care," said I. "If a lady were to make these revelations respecting the toilet of another lady, there an't a gentleman in the world but would set her down as jealous."

"La, Mrs Ward, you're too hard on Lieutenant Maxwell!" said Lady Impey. "Never mind, sir, I'm glad to see you an't ashamed of your blue-and-silver, so as to want to change into a civil dress like the other young gentlemen."

"Pray, ma'am, don't offer me compliments which my purse deserves, and not I. Were I so happy as to be wealthy, sure you'd see me bowing before Mrs Ward in pea-green satin and gold lace, instead of being thankful to hide my uniform behind her chair."

"Well, sir, I'm sure Mrs Ward ought to be infinitely obliged to you for your attendance. So quiet as she is, too—not as if she furnished you any diversion." Mr Maxwell and I found it necessary to avoid each the other's eyes. "Now when I was a girl—not so very long ago, neither—the young ladies and gentlemen used to enjoy a good romp together on wet days and such-like. Why, I remember attending my mama to the seat of her cousin, Sir John Danvers, where we were afflicted with the worst weather imaginable for a fortnight. Lady Danvers herself got out her largest and strongest tablecloth for us, and we spread it on the top of the stairs. Then the young ladies sat upon it, holding fast to the balusters, and the gentlemen seized hold of the tablecloth and tried to pull it down the steps. You never saw such a tumble as there was at last!" and the good lady

sighed with pleasure at the recollection. "I suppose now you young persons would be too nice to do such a thing if we could manage it here?" she added.

"I fear it would hardly consort with the manners at present in vogue, ma'am," said Mr Maxwell; "but when the new code of which Mr Macintosh speaks comes into force, pray command me."

"Excuse me, ma'am," says Mr Macintosh, whose attention had wandered sadly during the last few minutes, "but I see Mr Barwell entering, and I have a word or two for his private ear."

He departed to waylay the unhappy Mr Barwell, and we laughed to behold the poor gentleman seek to avoid him under pretence of seeing a friend at t'other side of the apartment, but in vain.

"Sure, Captain," said I, "Mr Macintosh will set down in his book what you told us of your friend's recollections, and all the world will think us barbarians."

"No, ma'am, he won't, for it was true, and therefore he believes it false. What he'll set down will be the nonsense that the gentlemen at the Club amuse themselves with telling of him. They have made him believe that Mr Hastings is harsh and overbearing with the Indians, and that they hold him in abhorrence—whereas we know that he wins the hearts of all that have once met him face to face—and indeed they indulge him with all sorts of tales, knowing his *hobby-horsical* ways, and inventing the lies for the pleasure of seeing how easily he takes them in. I should write him down a fool but for the malice he displays."

"But sure 'twas you brought him hither, sir."

"That wan't my fault, ma'am. Mr Whitehill at Madrass got me to take him on board, assuring me that 'twas the most extraordinary man, and knew everything and everybody, though not above a month in India. It stands to reason that on the passage down, with my ship to look after, I couldn't spare time to read his volumes of writing, and he disputed all day with my other passenger, who had spent thirty years in the East. Both their cots stood in the round-house, and I used to find 'em arguing

whenever I went through to observe the depth of water from the balcony. Then when we came into the river, he desired to instruct the pilot in his duty——"

"A Hooghley pilot!" I cried, smiling to remember how Mr Macintosh had desired to instruct Mrs Hastings in her tambour-work.

"Yes, ma'am; and the only way I could stop him was by confiding to him that these pilots were such nasty illiberal fellows that they had a trick of braining with a capstan-bar anybody they conceived to know more than themselves. I spoke hastily to him once or twice, I won't deny, but he was pleased to be reconciled with me before he landed. I wish I had had a chance to warn Mr Hastings before he could trouble him with persuading of him to read his remarks, but judging by the gentleman's abuse of him at the Club, he han't been permitted to take up much of his time. As it is, I wish Mr Hastings mayn't repent the kindness he's showed him, for the creature does nothing but watch for chance words that he may carry to Mr Francis. He is resolved to return hither as private secretary when his new patron is made Governor-General, and that's his reason for being so strong upon all the business of government here being carried on in English. The Indians are to forsake their own tongue for the convenience of Governor Francis and Mr Secretary Macintosh."

"But it an't likely he'll be permitted to return in the *Swallow*, by all I hear," says Mr Maxwell.

"No, sir; and his manner of speaking on the subject is such as I couldn't repeat in the ladies' presence. He protests the Governor-General and Mr Barwell are determined to cheat him out of his two thousand rupees, and that he'll ruin them both for it when he gets home. But to see what fools some men are! There's Mr Shore says to me t'other day, 'Price,' says he, 'you have imported the Wandering Jew; the man knows everything.' 'Begging your pardon, sir,' says I, 'he has swallowed the Universal History, and can bring up any part of it that he pleases.' 'But, Price,' says he, ''tis a man of great consequence; I have seen letters from him to my Lord North and all the Ministry.' 'Why, yes, sir; but have you ever seen any letters from them to

him?' and the good young gentleman had never thought of that! Why, sir, Mr Macintosh has read aloud to me and my mates his letters to his female cousins—though whether on the white or the black side I can't say; the black, I should judge, since the ladies' names had a French ring about 'em—which is a thing no gentleman would do, whether he intended to despatch them or not. But so far as I can learn, the only letters he sent off were those he directed to my Lord Stormont from Port L'Orient, detailing the hostile preparations making there against us—and they were intercepted by the French Government. The man has nothing but that to thank for his being imprisoned and treated as a spy, and poor Padra Yate with him; but you'll observe the French wouldn't keep him. They had the wit to know he would annoy us worse alive than dead, and so they favoured us with sending of him on."

(Mr Maxwell and I laughed merrily at this, as I can well remember, little knowing how much the malice of Mr Macintosh was to contribute to deepen the prejudice with which every the least action of Mr Hastings was regarded in England. Furnished by Mr Francis with every assistance he could desire, even so far as copies of documents supposed to be secret and confidential, he swelled the stream of scurrilous pamphleteers under the names of *Junius Asiaticus*, *Philo-Junius Asiaticus*, *Consistency*, *No Party Man*, and the like, besides imposing upon the world his impudent collection of letters under the name of an honest record of travel and observation. The zealous efforts of Captain Price and other friends of the Governor-General failed to undo the injury done, so that I shall never again think lightly of the harm in the power of a being apparently contemptible.—*Note added in* 1818.)

CHAPTER XIV.

AN ACCOMMODATION.

CALCUTTA, *Dec. 27th*, 1779.

Sure some malevolent genius must have hurled an apple of discord among those who conduct the government of this Presidency and the British possessions in India, for no sooner is one dispute reconciled than another springs up. The happy arrival of letters last month, confirming Mr Hastings in the chair for another year, recalled many waverers to his standard, and relieved him of the most poignant of his disabilities, but fresh troubles are arisen to balance this advantage. The Supreme Court and the Council are now at open war, arising out of the affair of the Raja of Cossijurra. Acting on the advice of the Council, not to appear before a court which possessed no authority to summon him, the Raja was tried and condemned in his absence, and a writ issued for the sequestration of his effects. His estate lying in the neighbourhood of Midnapore, the Council ordered Colonel Ahmuty, the officer commanding at that station, to give no aid to any official of the Court who might be detailed to execute the judgment. Not to be baffled, the Court sergeants assembled a mongrel sort of a force of their own, comprising sailors, peons and discharged seapoys, armed them with muskets and bayonets, and marched upon the Raja's mansion. This they broke into, and seized everything they could find, violating even the sacred precincts of the *zenannah*, and the prince's domestic temple. The women had happily been conveyed away beforehand, but the idol of the family was torn from its shrine, and packed like a common utensil in a basket. Anticipating the just complaint of the Gentoo population, whose sentiments, in these two particulars of such delicacy and importance in their estimation, have always been respected even by the most oppressive of their Mogul rulers, the Council ordered the immediate apprehension of all the persons concerned in the outrage, and issued a notice to all the Zemeendars of the province,

assuring them of their independence of the Supreme Court, except in certain specified cases. At the same time, the officer who effected the arrest of the agents of the Court was protected against its vengeance. Thus matters remain at present, with all India, so to speak, agog to perceive what will be the nature of the Court's reply to the decisive action of the Council.

Another cruel disappointment for Mr Hastings is the strange behaviour of Sir Eyre Coote, who appears to nourish the odd ambition of proving himself the most flighty and capricious of men. Already in his tour among the up-country stations he has exhibited the most monstrous dislike and contempt for the Company's troops, and especially for the Golandauz, or common men of the Artillery, the arm to which Colonel Pearse and Mr Maxwell are attached. Bitter complaints of his arrogant proceedings have reached Mr Hastings since the Commander-in-Chief first started on his journey, and it has cost him infinite trouble to allay them, representing the extreme advantage to the army of a thorough inspection and fresh organisation by a general of so much experience. But the excessive levity with which Sir Eyre Coote sees fit to presume upon the Governor-General's forbearance is now exhibited in a different matter. Among the smaller princes whom it was Mr Hastings' ambition to constitute into a barrier to the advance of the Maratta power in a northern direction is the Ranna of Ghode,[1] a dependant of Mahdajee Scindia's. Upon some occasion of discontent with his superior, this ruler made overtures to Mr Hastings, who, willing to execute a part of his design, even though he was baulked of the whole, betrayed a certain willingness to admit him to an alliance. The Ranna seeing his situation likely to become dangerous, was not behindhand in pressing his cause, and the treaty was concluded at the beginning of this month, Captain Palmer, of whom I have already spoke, the Governor-General's military secretary, being entrusted with the execution of it. The General had previously expressed his concurrence with every the most minute article of the projected negociation; but this appointment, so natural and convenient, has thrown him into a fury. He writes asserting that a gentleman of his

[1] Gohad.

own family would have been the proper person to despatch for the purpose, and that Captain Palmer, as one of the Governor-General's gentlemen, can only have been employed for some sinister and mercenary object. With incredible vehemence he passes to denouncing each separate portion of the treaty he had previously approved, and calling upon the Council to support him in his protest by refusing to ratify it. And all this after the extraordinary sacrifices both of interest and authority that Mr Hastings has made in his behalf! Mr Hastings himself feels this unhandsome behaviour too acutely to allow him even to address a remonstrance to the General on the subject; but Mr Barwell, with his usual good-humour and firmness, has taken the matter in hand, and keeps the letter back from the Council while he trusts to bring the capricious veteran to his senses.

CALCUTTA, *Jan. ye* 31*st*, 1780.

The new year appears to have brought with it some promise of peace for this distracted administration, for there are signs, and such as commend themselves even to cool observers, that an accommodation is about to take place between the Governor-General and Mr Francis. In this there's nothing odd to those who have been spectators of Mr Hastings' perpetual anxiety for peace, but nobody can determine how Mr Francis can have been persuaded to lay aside his rancour against his great opponent. The person on whom the blessing promised to the peacemakers must in this case descend is Sir John Day, who, with the sincere amiability that distinguishes him, has spared no pains to compose the discords which he found existing. In this grateful task he has been assisted by Mr Barwell, who, though pledged to remain in Bengall so long as his support was essential to Mr Hastings, had no desire to fix himself for life an inhabitant of Calcutta, and found also his faithful adherence rendered nugatory by the flighty behaviour of Sir Eyre Coote. Should the General chuse to act in accordance with his own declarations, and vote with Mr Hastings, the government would be secure without Mr Barwell's aid, while his support could do nothing for the Governor-General if the Commander-in-Chief took the notion to throw himself upon the side of Mess. Francis

and Wheler. 'Tis commonly agreed that Mr Hastings, with that greatness of mind in which he is pre-eminent, stipulates only for an absolute discretion in carrying on and concluding the war with the Marattas, abandoning to his opponent all those questions of patronage over which Mr Francis is so frequently exercised. May his forbearance not fail of an adequate reward!

It's possible that a reconciliation between the two gentlemen has been rendered easier by their finding themselves of necessity on the same side in opposition to the encroachments of the Supreme Court, which has ordered the attachment for contempt of the officer who arrested the perpetrators of the Cossijurra outrage, and of Mr Naylor, the Company's attorney. The military gentleman is duly protected by his commanding officer under the Council's order, but poor Mr Naylor has been thrown into prison upon his refusal to answer a string of interrogatories dealing with matters officially secret. The adherents of the Court are now pleasing themselves with threats of summoning the Governor-General and Council for trespass, and there the matter stands, having ranged Mr Hastings definitely upon the side of Mr Francis, and against his friend of five-and-twenty years. As before in Mr Francis' case, so now in Sir Elijah's, the opposing parties meet in social commerce and the recreations proper to the season; but beneath this formal civility is concealed the most furious indignation on the part of the Chief-Justice, and the most poignant grief on that of Mr Hastings, and these sentiments, when they are suffered to appear, serve only to widen the existing breach.

The conduct of Sir Eyre Coote remains as little practicable as ever. Upon the receipt of an urgent message from the Ranna of Ghode, to the effect that the Marattas were ravaging his dominions, Mr Hastings, punctual in performing his part of the treaty, sent immediate orders to Captain Popham, who was encamped on the banks of the Jumna with a small mixed force in readiness to reinforce General Goddard, to advance against them. This has renewed the wrath of the Commander-in-Chief, and his querulous letters, declaring the detachment too weak, too little organised — absolutely incapable, in short, for the business on which it's sent—pour in by new hircarras twice

a-week, However, Mr Hastings declines to propitiate him by recalling Captain Popham, and has ordered Major Camac, who is also posted on the Jumna with two battalions, to proceed likewise to the Ranna's assistance.

Mr Macintosh is at length departed from Calcutta, but not in the *Swallow*, on board of which vessel Mr Barwell has half taken his passage. The *traveller*, as we call him, had the mortification to discover before leaving the real estimation in which he was held by that good-natured gentleman, and thereafter included him with Mr Hastings as a mark for all the vituperation of which he was capable, to the huge entertainment of the gentlemen at the Club. But if he spent his nights with them, his days were passed in plotting with Mr Francis, and—so Captain Price declares—in securing copies of documents believed to be secret and confidential, to take home with him. He was very urgent with his patron to return to England with him, fearing (so says Captain Price) that an accommodation with Mr Hastings might be reached in his absence, and himself forgotten; but Mr Francis insisting on his departure, and furnishing him with all the aids malice could invent or treachery provide, he sailed in the *Ganges* a week ago, with the declared purpose of ruining Mr Hastings.

CALCUTTA, *March ye* 1*st*.

The accommodation is definitely concluded, but before writing of it I must seize my chance to set down another matter. We are now favoured with a weekly journal printed in Calcutta, which commenced its course at the end of January, and is pleased to style itself 'The Bengal Gazette.' The proprietor, Mr Hickey, is a shrew fellow of little education but unbounded assurance, and has contrived to entertain the settlement very tolerably these few weeks with recording the arrival of intelligence from the other Presidencies, the movements of the better sort of the inhabitants, his own moral reflections, and the poetical essays of various of the young gentlemen of the place. Moreover, if a dog is gone astray, or a brooch has been dropped in mounting the stairs at the Harmonic, the paper affords the means of advertising the loss and offering a reward; and the ladies find it very agreeable to have it announced when a China

cargo is to be sold, or Mr Andrews at the Library has received a consignment of new books. If Mr Hickey would confine his activity to such lines as these nobody could find anything but praise either for his design or its execution; but in one of his late numbers he has afforded publicity to a satire or pasquinade of the most improper character,[1] holding up to ridicule all the most respectable members of the community. It's true they are all good-natured enough to laugh at it; but that, as Mr Hastings says, is because every man sees his neighbour equally ill handled with himself, and to express anger would be to confess the libel true. The satire is in the form of a pretended report of a meeting held to consider the best form of public diversion with which to replace the Harmonic, which threatens to become *boring*, and it sets forth with great seriousness that a new kind of theatrical entertainment was resolved upon. As, in the case of the Harmonic, each subscriber in turn provides a concert, a ball and a supper for the ladies, so now each person was to produce his favourite play, representing the chief character himself. I can hardly read without indignation the ribald suggestions which follow, and I have been forced to wait until I could secure the paper unseen to copy them out, for I don't desire anybody should know it. But since they an't without a certain sort of adroitness, and some characters, at least, receive their just deserts, I will put down a few of the more pointed and less offensive, for despite his polite refusal to affront the ladies, Mr Hickey has no scruple in employing the utmost freedom of language. This is how the wretch begins his list:—

"The G-v-rn-r-G-n-r-l declared for tragedy, selecting the part of *Tamburlaine the Great;* but the committee reminding him that the mildness of the present age had altogether removed the fierceness and thirst for blood proper to the character, Mr H-st-ngs declined to take part in Rowe's *Tamerlane* since he could not have Marlowe's, and matters remained at a deadlock until the entrance of his lady. Mrs H-st-ngs having considered the advantages offered by the part of Nourmahal in *Aurengzebe*, in which she might cover herself with jewels from head to foot,

[1] The number of 'The Bengal Gazette' containing this satire is unfortunately not extant.

finally renounced it for the character of Lady Wronghead in the *Provok'd Husband*. Upon this her obliging spouse, with all the readiness imaginable, also exchanged tragedy for comedy, in defiance of a thousand previous assurances.

"Mr Fr-nc-s elected to play the part of Zanga in *The Revenge*, but being prevailed with by the committee to oblige them with a specimen of his powers, it was unanimously agreed that there was more of nature than of art in his representation, and in especial that his delivery of the words, 'I hate Alonzo,' was likely to alarm the ladies." (This is one of the just delineations I mentioned, and shows that others have the same doubt of Mr Francis' good faith in the present negociations as besets myself. But to compare my dear Mrs Hastings with the odious country dame who wastes her spouse's substance in the hope of purchasing an entrance into the company of people of *ton!*) "On this Mr Fr-nc-s very civilly consented to assume the character of Brutus in *Julius Cæsar*, the opening scenes of which, he observed, were more in accordance with the circumstances of the present. A voice in the crowd suggested Lothario in the *Fair Penitent* as a more suitable character, adding that there would be no need to look far for the Calista, but the committee refused the hint, for fear of affronting the ladies.

"A veiled lady newly arrived from England requested the part of Lady Easy in the *Careless Husband*, and entreated in the most moving style to be allowed her choice of the gentleman who should play Sir Charles. In view of the evident alarm and apprehension excited in the breast of a certain gentleman on hearing this request, his friends have begged it should be stated that the fair petitioner was not Mrs Fr-nc-s."

(Major Baggs, who was expelled from Bengall by the Company's order as an interloper two months ago, figures next as Captain Bobadil, which must be a bitter jest for Mr Francis, and Mr Macintosh as the True-born Englishman, a name still more cruel, since the gentleman is reported to be the son of a Scotch West Indian planter and a French Creole lady, and has more the air of a black Portugueze than either.)

"Mr Wh-l-r was complimented by acclamation with the part of Epicene in the *Silent Woman*, Mr Fr-nc-s testifying almost

with tears that he never uttered a word without permission had been given him.

"Mr B-rw-ll found himself very happily fitted with the part of Sir Matthew Mite in *The Nabob*. His sole disappointment found vent in the exclamation, 'But I shall have nothing to learn!'

"Sir E-r- C--t- chose the character of Sir Francis Gripe in the *Busybody*, remarking that that of Sir Jealous Traffick would please him equally if his friend the Ch--f-J-st-c- desired the first, but

"The Ch--f-J-st-c-, refusing also the character of Justice Hategood in a play that was offered to be wrote for him on the *Pilgrim's Progress* by Mr Naylor, had already suited himself with the part of *Richard III.* in Shakespeare's tragedy of that name. The easy vivacity with which he delivered the line, 'Hang'd by the neck; so much for Nuncomar!' met with universal admiration, as did his announcement that the piece would be presented with a splendour never hitherto seen on any stage, since in the Tent scene he would have the assistance of the ghosts of the entire nation of the Rohillas, lent by the G-v-rn-r-G-n-r-l, who had no present use for them, and found them disturb his slumbers.

"The Ch--f-J-st-c-'s lady, finding no part to her taste in the tragedy, chose that of Lady Fanciful in the *Provok'd Wife*, expressing an innocent avidity to indulge without scandal in the triple delight of dress, slander, and paint.

"Sir J-hn D-y found himself universally felicitated as the *Good-natured Man*, and desired to accept the part of Mr Honeywood. It was remarked that he would have appeared to prefer such a character as that of *Cato* in the tragedy, but his usual complacency induced him to yield to the wishes of his friends.

"Lieutenant M-xw-ll displayed an uncommon anxiety for *She Stoops to Conquer*, with himself in the character of Young Marlow, but was forced to confess that his mistress, knowing herself to be already triumphant, declined the part of Miss Hardcastle. In compassion for the gentleman's hard case, several suggestions were offered by the committee, such as that Mr M-xw-ll should play Lord Morelove in the piece chosen by

the mysterious lady, and pique his charmer into kindness. Mr Fr-nc-s observed that the part he would recommend was that of Leon in *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, but was prevailed with by his friends to withdraw his remark, in consideration of the fatal result of the last duel in which the young gentleman was engaged." (Poor Mr Maxwell! will that ridiculous affair never be permitted to sink into oblivion?) "The committee finally commended to Mr M-xw-ll the character of the bashful Captain Duretete in the *Inconstant*, advising him to secure his friend Lieutenant Norfar as the Mirabel, and learn by his example how to ingratiate himself with the fair.

"The charming Mrs W-rd met with a general acceptance in chusing the part of Almeria in the *Mourning Bride*, but Mr Fr-nc-s was pleased to observe that he would write her a fitter piece in the character of the *Widow of Ephesus*. This pleasantry provoking very hearty remonstrances from several of the young gentlemen present, the *Man of Wit* found it prudent to remark that he had spoken hastily, and intended to suggest the *Perverse Widow* in the *Spectator*."

(Was there ever a more shameful falsehood put into print? I had some notion of having heard of the Widow of Ephesus, and soon discovered the story by a little searching. How anybody could perceive the faintest resemblance between Hester Ward and a creature who accepted a new lover in the course of weeping at her husband's tomb on the night of his burial I can't tell, but for three days after the horrid suggestion appeared there was hardly a gentleman that could approach me with a serious countenance. I am persuaded Mr Maxwell had rejoiced to seek out the man Hickey and cane him; but the lines relating to himself had rendered him so conscious and awkward that he could not bring himself to look me in the face or inquire my commands. In any case, the punishment might not have reached its proper object, since public opinion ascribes the satire to the colony of Franciscan young gentlemen opposite Mr Grand's, though they have endeavoured to disarm suspicion by introducing Mr Shore,[1] their most respectable member, as Joseph Surface, the sprightly Mr Ducarell figuring as his brother

[1] Afterwards Lord Teignmouth.

Charles. The jest is now beginning to be forgot, though Mr Hastings still delights to address his lady as my Lady Wrong-head, and perhaps in time the unfortunate Mr Maxwell and I may forget it too.)

CALCUTTA, *March ye 6th.*

Mr Barwell is now departed, carrying with him on board the *Swallow* the despatches which are to acquaint the Court of Directors that there's peace in the Bengall Council for the first time since its constitution. This peace was concluded three weeks ago, when Mr Francis and Sir John Day dined here one evening to settle its terms, but it could not be regarded as irrevocable until the Governor-General had finally deprived himself of his faithful supporter. With his invariable goodness of heart, Mr Hastings is now fully persuaded of the sincerity of Mr Francis, and rallies his lady on her declared inability to repose complete faith in his intentions.

"Alas!" he cried once, "I can't satisfy everybody. Here's the entire settlement ready to present me with addresses of congratulation, but my prudent Marian won't so much as felicitate me by a word. Sure it must be suspicion this time, my dearest, and not prudence."

"Oh, pardon me, Hastings," says his lady. "It's my misfortune, not my fault, dat I can't all at once forget de past achievements of Mr Francis, and receive him to intimacy as you are doing."

"But is it the shrewdness or the sincerity of Sir John that you asperse, my Marian? So estimable a character, so eminent a lawyer—sure both ought to be above suspicion."

"I have nothing against Sir John Day. He's a good sort of man, and as fond of peace-making as Hester here. But I won't believe dat Mr Francis is changed in a night from a devil into an angel."

"But sure he may have liberty to perceive where he's been wrong? Come, my Marian; he has been approached for the first time by an open, honest fellow, who has no interest in the affair but the credit of the government. He is offered a share in the administration, instead of finding himself in a perpetual opposition, and who can wonder that it tempts him? That was

the first step, and I trust to make it so much to his advantage that he'll never regret it. You know me, Marian, that I an't wanting in generosity. You don't anticipate that I shall disgust him by any unkindness?"

"You, Hastings?" His lady laughed. "My apprehension is dat Mr Francis will sacrifice even his own advantage to his hatred of you, as he has done before."

"My Marian is doing the poor man an injustice, and I'll prove it to her. Knowing the importance attached to the power of gratifying expectation or rewarding service by the exercise of patronage, I proposed that each member of the Council should enjoy a proportionate share in this, according to the period of his service. This, said Sir John, was far above what Mr Francis could have demanded, and must overwhelm him with surprise. But it did more, for he behaved in the most genteel and liberal manner possible, expressing his desire to leave all patronage whatsoever in my hands, as pertaining to my office. What does my Marian say to that?"

"I say dat he anticipated you would immediately repeat your offer and adhere to it. Was dat so?"

"Questionless, my dear. I considered it as an engagement on my part, and gave him to know as much."

"I thought so! Oh, Hastings, will you never learn to know dat man? If he possessed but the skill to conceal his hatred of you, he might lead you *by de nose*, as Captain Price says."

"My dear, I do know him, and you may be very sure that everything is *droost wa-rast*[1] in the matter. I have every confidence in Sir John Day; and Wheler, though no Solomon, is an honest fellow. They will both restrain Francis if the hatred of which you speak should prompt him to act improperly."

"Ah, Hastings, if Mr Francis is entered into dis accommodation with the express design to throw off de mask at some moment of difficulty and effect your ruin, neither de one honest gentleman nor de oder will be able to restrain him."

"By Heaven!" cried Mr Hastings, "if he have such a design in view, the moment of his throwing off the mask shall be his last! But no, I won't contemplate the possibility of such base-

[1] *Durust wa rast*, fair and square.

ness. Compose yourself, my Marian; call to your aid that feminine softness, that easy confidence, which should render you incapable even of imagining such a treachery. Allow your husband some slight discernment. After all, he has known Francis as long as you have, and suffered far more at his hands. If he is able to forget the accumulated miseries of years, surely his Marian may do the same? The man is by birth a gentleman, the associate of gentlemen from his infancy. The duplicity you suggest is incredible. You must not judge of him in other matters by his conduct in affairs of gallantry, since we know that many otherwise excellent persons allow themselves in a different standard with regard to such things."

"You are too sanguine, Hastings; you undervalue your enemy."

"Nay, my dear, that's Price's trick. He imagines it adds consequence to me to pour every sort of scorn upon Francis."

"Sure, dear sir, some of it is justified?" I ventured to say. "There can't be a doubt that Mr Francis employs Mr Anderson and Mr Ducarell and the rest to write his minutes for him, and then copies them out and brings them to Council as his own? Why, Mr Price told me that you yourself once placed the poor man in a terrible fix by sending Mr Shore on an embassy to the Raja of Kisnagur when the other two young gentlemen were also out of Calcutta—that Mr Francis was compelled to feign illness as an excuse for not attending Council."

"These are recollections that should not be brought up at this period of solemn reconciliation, ma'am. Yes, I did play that trick on Mr Francis; but when the poor man's illness had extended to a fortnight I compassionated him, and sent privately for Mr Shore. No sooner was his return announced than Mr Wheler very gravely acquainted me of Mr Francis' recovery. I said I could have prophesied it to him two days before. But Mr Francis appeared duly at Council the day after Mr Shore's return."

"But don't that prove him to be dependent on others for those terrible long minutes with which he wearies you, sir? If he don't write them himself, it must be that he can't."

"Why, no, ma'am; to my mind it don't follow at all. That

would imply a person of mean intellect, which Mr Francis is not. His unpremeditated speeches in Council have a vigour of vituperation that few can equal, he conducts a huge correspondence with respectable characters at home, and his friends won't let us forget that he keeps a diary. Will you tell me that a man of these attainments an't capable to write a minute on the price of salt?"

"Perhaps he don't love figures, sir—or it baffles him to find all the records writ in Moors? What other reason can there be?"

"Why, that I can't be certain of, but I can make a guess, remembering the rumours current, as my friends told me, when Mr Francis was sent out. Nobody could assign a cause for the appointment, so that it must be a job, they said. He must have served Administration as a pamphleteer, or in some such line, and was now receiving his reward. To my mind the explanation lies there, though I don't forget that a place may be given to purchase a foe as well as to reward a friend. Put it that Mr Francis had amused himself writing either for or against the Ministry, and with sufficient success to make his pamphlets a political power, and you'll see that a post on the Council of Bengall might be offered him either as a salvo for his efforts or an inducement for 'em to cease. But in either case he would have no desire for the nature of his former activities to become known, as might happen if he gave rein to his opinions in a literary style, and therefore—or so I believe—he abjured the propensity entirely, and is content to have it supposed that he relies for his minutes upon the kind assistance of the young gentlemen."

"And it is dis man—capable of such secrecy, of such self-control—dat you despise?" cried Mrs Hastings.

CHAPTER XV.

A BETRAYAL.

BELVIDERE-HOUSE, ALLYPOOR, *May ye 29th*, 1780.

The engagement between the Governor-General and Mr Francis still subsists—something, I fancy, to the astonishment of the Presidency, which is as full of rumours and startling reports as a city threatened with a siege. A fortnight ago the whole town was agitated with the intelligence of a pacquet from Europe arrived overland by way of Suez, which was supposed to contain advices of the most momentous character; but the entire affair resolved itself presently into an Egyptian mummy, which was sent as a tribute of respect by the Company's agent at Grand Cairo to Mr Hastings, and by him presented to Mr Livius, who has a *shouq* for such rarities.

Yet there is slight cause for wonder in this extreme uneasiness of the public mind, in view of the singular course of the dispute between the Council and the Supreme Court, on which, so to speak, hang the liberties of all the inhabitants of Bengall, whether white or black. This quarrel raged with all its former virulence until the month of March, the Court detaining in prison the unfortunate Mr Naylor, and issuing a summons for trespass against the Governor-General and Council, which they refused to answer. This was declared by the Judges a clear contempt of court; and there matters remained for a while, neither party being apparently desirous to proceed to extremities. There was some talk in the Council of withholding the salaries of the Judges and all the officials of the Court; but this measure was rejected, in view of the hardship that would thus be inflicted on the poorer sort of them, and the attitude of ignoring their pretensions in a superior style was maintained. But while this affectation of indifference reigned in public, the partisans of the Court yielded themselves in private to the most unbridled transports, following Sir Elijah Impey, who denounced the Governor-General in terms of the utmost violence, alleging

that he had betrayed his friend of five-and-twenty years for the sake of the alliance with Mr Francis.

To a person of Mr Hastings' extreme sensibility, this groundless accusation served cruelly to embitter the misfortunes of the moment, and his situation became truly pitiable, since he found himself on the one hand taunted and reviled with the utmost grossness by his former friend, and on the other urged to excessive severities by his new ally. It was not in Mr Francis to spare the Governor-General one pang of which the situation was capable, and I solemnly declare that he viewed his sufferings with a satisfaction that had in it something diabolical. But perhaps I do him an injustice. How could the man who never kept a friend experience any sympathy with him who had never till that moment lost one? But the affair was terminated in a sudden and wholly surprising manner, and by means which are not yet fully explained. Cossinaut Bobboo, whose action had served to embroil the Council and the Court to so unprecedented a degree, withdrew precipitately from his suit, and all the proceedings consequent upon it were quashed. This happened more than a month ago, and the public is still waiting, as Mr Maxwell says, to learn what was the inducement offered to Sir Elijah and his colleagues to retire from their position. He surmises some compromise, by which the dignity of the Court may be maintained while the authority of the Council is preserved; but he has again remarked to me, with deep regret, that any concession made by Mr Hastings will bear, in the eyes of evil-disposed persons, the appearance of a bribe. To this I can only reply that in such a case our noble patron must needs determine to disregard the opinions of the vulgar, and take the course which best commends itself to his mind for reconciling the disorders of the settlement, and establishing afresh that social commerce which has never been so nearly interrupted as this season.

The war against the Marattas, which was the object nearest the heart of the Governor-General in concluding his accommodation with Mr Francis, has proceeded of late in a manner so wholly satisfactory as to emphasize in the highest degree the merits of General Goddard and the resolute support he has received from Mr Hastings. Finding it useless to contend further

in debate with the invincible stubbornness, aided by an extraordinary duplicity, of Nannah Furneess and the Poonah administration, the General broke off negociations, and, after capturing the fort of Dubhoy, took by storm the extensive and celebrated city of Ahmedabad, and crossed the river Myhee in order to offer battle to the combined forces of Mahdajee Scindia and Tuccajee Holkar, two of the leading princes among the Marattas. These personages refusing to fight, and endeavouring to amuse him with negociations, General Goddard declined to be duped, and, breaking through them with his army, is now established in convenient quarters for the rainy season near the River Nerbudda. From this position, which is the most suitable in the world for renewing the war under favourable conditions, he has despatched an urgent request to the Governor-General that a diversion may be attempted in his behalf, by attacking the Marattas from some other quarter, and if possible the dominions of Scindia himself, so that by distracting their attention when he resumes operations they may more easily yield to his advance. An answer to this appeal is furnished by the despatch of the force under Captain Popham, destined for the reinforcement of General Goddard, in the first place to the assistance of the Ranna of Ghode, through whose dominions those of Scindia may be most easily approached, thus striking a blow at the Maratta where he least anticipates it. The matter is now under discussion in the Council, and Mr Hastings has returned on several occasions with a clouded brow. Sure it's not possible even for Mr Francis deliberately to break a promise made with so much circumstance and solemnity, or I had been tempted to conjecture that he was offering that interference against which he has bound himself with the Governor-General's conduct of the war.

A speedy and prosperous issue to General Goddard's campaign is the more to be desired that the Madras Committee appear to be afflicted with the same disorder of the mind as has led to such cruel disaster in the affairs of the Bombay gentlemen. Deriving no warning from the unfortunate result of the patronage extended by the latter to Ruggobah, the Madras Committee have provided themselves with a client of their own, half-

favourite, half-victim, in the person of the Nabob of Arcott. To this prince they have leased the Guntoor Circar, by the acquisition of which they have alienated the friendship both of Hyder and of Nizam Ally Cawn, and now, on account of his claim upon it, plead inability to restore the territory to its rightful owner, the brother of the Nizam. This we learn by private information, for the Committee preserve an air of the most mysterious secresy; and although Sir Thomas Rumbold, the Governor, is returned home in ill health, there's little to be expected from his successor, Mr Whitehill, who has been his close supporter—I might even say accomplice—throughout. Though Sir Thomas retires with a jaunty air, felicitating the Presidency on the peaceful relations in which he leaves it with the country powers, there an't wanting those who declare that he has once more consulted his sole advantage in withdrawing with the fortune he has amassed before the threatened vengeance of the offended potentates overwhelms his colleagues.

The venerable divine so oddly selected as an embassador returned from Hyder's court with no very clear idea but that the prince was still highly incensed against the English, and the agent despatched on his return failed to meet even with civility at the hands of the proud Moorman. This gentleman, Mr Gray, was provided with presents for the Mysorean ruler,—for all the world, says Mr Hastings, as though one sought to arrest the onslaught of a *must huttee*, (which is a wild or rogue elephant,) by sending an infant to desire him to accept of a four-anna piece, —but these were of a character so trivial and unsuitable that Hyder forced him to resume them. Such was the exasperation of the prince, that not only did he use Mr Gray rather as a spy than an embassador, but he was so bold as to seize a ship flying Danish colours, which was come to an anchor in the port of Calicut, for the sole reason that it had on board six English gentlemen and the wives of two of them. These unhappy persons were used with the utmost barbarity, the tyrant designing to force the gentlemen to enter his service and train his troops after the European manner; but the discovery that none of them possessed any military knowledge, coupled with the courageous and disinterested entreaties of Mr Gray, induced him

at last to order their release. One of the females thus happily rescued, a Mrs Fay, wife of a gentleman who follows the profession of the law, and is seeking to obtain a subsistence in India under the protection of the Chief-Justice, is arrived in Calcutta with her spouse, and has had the honour to be received by Mrs Hastings. The vicissitudes which have beset this unfortunate lady, whose affection for her spouse has led her to brave the hardship and discomfort of a journey from England overland, can't but be commiserated, but I could wish she had succeeded in displaying a more equable spirit in her audience of my patroness. The mind of Mrs Hastings is of so elevated a cast that she is incapable, if I may say so, of estimating the unhappiness caused by a succession of trifling discomforts to characters of a less heroic mould, and I could perceive that she considered the lamentations of Mrs Fay over the loss of so many of her possessions, and the unkindness of her fellow-voyagers, to betray a sadly despondent turn. I am convinced that the melancholy Mrs Fay perceived the fact also, and I fear she'll carry away with her the belief that the disposition of Mrs Hastings is not a feeling one, than which nothing could be more erroneous.

As usual in the hot weather, we are now established at Belvidere, visiting the settlement only on occasions of ceremony or entertainment. The season has been more than commonly animated, the gentlemen offering entertainments to the ladies in the most liberal style imaginable, at first at the Harmonic, but lately in the form of excursions to various rural spots. Thus Mr Croftes had the honour to receive the Governor-General and Mrs Hastings at his plantation at Sooksaugur; and several parties of pleasure have been made up for Bearcool, which is intended to be transformed into a place of fashionable resort, with convenient lodgings like those at Bath or Cheltenham, and a fine drive or promenade along the sea-beach, which consists of fine dry sand, very convenient for bathing, and is totally free from all noxious animals with the exception of crabs. The gaiety of the settlement has been enhanced by the arrival of two young ladies of the highest *ton*, who brought with them a new variety of the Cottillion, in which, with the greatest

patience and good humour, they instructed their partners before dancing it with universal applause at the Harmonic. This graceful exercise stimulated the *gay dogs* of the Presidency to project an entertainment of the most genteel and extensive character to take place at Baraset, and to unite, in the spelling of the ingenious Mr Hickey, the delights of a "Ridotto, all Fresco Fete Champetre and Ball Pare," combining Ranelagh with Vauxhall. But the extraordinary heat of the season, which is the worst ever experienced, and the threatened breaking of the rains before their usual time, have compelled its postponement until the cold season, to the huge disappointment of many of our ladies of quality, who intended being present in fancy dresses. Among these, not the least disappointed is Mrs Hastings; but for once I am hard-hearted enough to rejoice in her misfortune, since she is by no means in strong health, and I had feared the agitation of the occasion for her.

June ye 15th.

The incredible has happened, and the worst suspicions of Mrs Hastings and myself are proved true. Mr Francis has set himself deliberately to thwart the Governor-General's plans for the prosecution of the war. A fortnight ago Mr Hastings proposed that Captain Popham, who with his combined force was acting in the territory and on the behalf of the Ranna of Ghode, should be relieved by Major Camac, with a larger force more proper for the business, and despatched to join General Goddard, as was intended at the first. Mr Francis, making much of an opinion obtained from Sir Eyre Coote to the effect that Captain Popham's corps, being composed of drafts from different regiments, was not a force on which any dependence could be placed, insisted on its withdrawal and disbandment, though he approved of his relief by Major Camac. Not desiring to arouse the ill-humour of the irascible General further by disregarding his pronouncement, Mr Hastings, with the mildness and patience that always distinguish him, consented, though sorely against his will, to the recall of Captain Popham, and an order to this effect was passed. But since then, the situation becoming daily more serious, and a further earnest appeal arriving from General Goddard for a diversion in his favour

from the side of Bengall, the Governor-General conceived the idea to utilise the mixed corps of Captain Popham prior to its withdrawal by directing it to march in company with the relieving force of Major Camac to strike a blow at Scindia in his own territory. This motion he brought before the Council three days ago, and Mrs Hastings and I watched for his return with the greatest anxiety, desiring to learn its fate. We augured the worst when Mr Hastings entered his lady's presence with a despondent step, and without any attempt to divert her with his usual *budget* of Calcutta news.

"You have nothing cheerful to tell us, Hastings?" says my patroness.

"Nothing, my Marian. Francis and Wheler reject my motion without even the pretence of affording it a decent consideration, and have entered a minute against it."

"May it not be dat you haf acted too suddenly, leaving de gentlemen to feel taken by surprise, which dey would naturally resent?"

Mr Hastings laughed bitterly. "My generous Marian would give even the devil his due. No, my dearest, they have no such excuse. When I first conceived my plan, I sent word of it to Mr Wheler, desiring of him to consider it, and I would call and give him a full explanation in the morning. He received the message with extreme agitation, and deprecated most earnestly the honour of so early a visit."

"Sure he hadn't received his instructions!" cried Mrs Hastings.

"My Marian's conclusions jump with mine. Resolved to anticipate Wheler's action, I made my first visit in the morning to Francis, but had little difficulty to see that he was already prepossessed against the proposal. He heard me with the cool and vacant attention of a man who has already made up his mind, offered his objections, and I left him. Desiring one of my hircarras to run before me to Mr Wheler's, and give him notice that I intended him a visit, I was informed by both chubdars and hircarras, all speaking at once, that the gentleman had been with Mr Francis when I entered the house, and had not yet quitted it. So the poor man must have lain concealed the entire space of my visit, which lasted about an hour and a

half! I fear the length of our consultations must have put him to some inconvenience."

"I trust it did!" cried Mrs Hastings, half in jest, half earnest. "And now, Hastings, what is to be de next step? Is dis treacherous behaviour of Mr Francis to meet with success?"

"Never! Such a thing would mean the destruction—the deserved destruction—of our power in India. The blow for which Goddard asks must be struck, and struck at once. My Marion will have guessed that it's not for nothing I have been so much engaged of late in correspondence with the court of Berar, but even she can scarce have divined the frightful danger to which we are exposed on that side. The army lately completed by Moodajee Bounceloe has been raised at the demand of the Poonah administration, which destines it for use against us; and this demand is now repeated with threats by Nizam Ally Cawn, who assigns to the Berar forces the task of overrunning Bengall, as their part in the great plan of extermination devised by himself and Hyder Naick. How do I know this, you'll ask? By the letters of the Bounceloe himself and his Dewan to their Vackeel here, all expressing an uncommon solicitude not to be led into hostilities against us, but betraying an equally strong apprehension that the combined powers of Hyder, the Nizam, and the Marattas will force 'em to it. Any lack of resolution in supporting Goddard will not only prolong the Maratta War and thus embolden our enemies, but will discourage and alienate our hesitating friends. And not only so, but 'twill stimulate the rebellious aspirations of Chyte Sing and the rest of our untrustworthy dependants. But you'll rejoice, my Marian, to learn that our measures with regard to that treacherous Zemeendar are proving successful. As though to prove the falsity of his asserted inability to pay the contribution levied upon him in aid of the war, his *burry*,[1] Lalla Suddanund, is now in Calcutta, bringing with him two lacks as a peace-offering in deprecation of my wrath!"

"Two lacks! Dat's an agreeable present!" said Mrs Hastings.

"Agreeable enough, if one could retain it. But that's impossible, of course. I gave the fellow assurances of my pro-

[1] *Bakhshi*, paymaster or treasurer.

tection, and desired him to carry the money home again. 'Twould indeed be agreeable to detain it for the necessities of the state, but it was designed as a personal present to myself. Stay! might it not even now afford the means of supporting Goddard? The burden of Francis and Wheler's opposition to the advance through Ghode is our empty treasury and inability to furnish supplies. But with these two lacks!" The Governor-General quitted his seat, and moved in an agitated style from end to end of the apartment, his mild and benevolent brow impressed with the lines of thought.

"You won't return dem at de bidding of an absurd scruple?" cried his lady. "To whom do dey belong if not to you?"

"No, my Marian, I won't return them, but I shall employ them in the service of the state. I had intended drawing up instructions to Major Camac, desiring him to proceed against Scindia's country with his own four battalions alone; and now I will remove the last shadow of justifiable opposition on the part of Francis and Wheler by paying the necessary charges myself, out of Chyte Sing's peace-offering. There can be no question of converting it to my own uses in such employment, and the sum will be amply sufficient. My enemies may teaze, as questionless they will, but I will die rather than betray Goddard's confidence in me, or lose the friendship of Berar."

Mrs Hastings appeared still not wholly satisfied, but her spouse failed to observe her lack of warmth. He was quickly engaged in computing the difference between the pay and *batta* (or field allowance) due to the troops if they remained in quarters, and the necessary addition to their expenses if they marched against Scindia's town of Eugene,[1] and was soon ready to announce that on the most exaggerated estimate, this would be less than two lacks, so that the ground would be cut from under the feet of Messieurs Francis and Wheler.

June ye 30th.

The extraordinary heat of the weather continuing, my dear Mrs Hastings has been a sad sufferer for the last fortnight. Disorders owing their origin to the heat are very prevalent in

[1] Ujein.

the settlement, and cases of sunstroke abound, especially among the troops, two of the artillerymen who fired the salute on the King's Birthday having died from this cause with an appalling suddenness. Many persons have been seized with an epidemic fever, styled, from the Italian, the *influenza*, among them my patroness, whose disregard of many of the precautions rendered necessary by the climate has at length brought the result that might have been anticipated. In my constant care of her I have had little time to remember political matters, and should have known nothing of them but for Mr Maxwell, who was desired by Mr Hastings to carry me out an airing in his buggy every evening, lest my own health should suffer. Mr Maxwell could tell me only that Mess. Francis and Wheler had rejected with considerable acrimony the Governor-General's motion for the despatch of Major Camac's force against Scindia's Malva territory, alleging a second time as an excuse the expense that would be incurred, thus leaving the way open for Mr Hastings to make his offer of taking the cost upon himself, which he was resolved to do on Monday, three days ago.

Not a little to my relief, the mind of Mrs Hastings, so powerful and so acute in its apprehension of all that relates to public affairs, has been during this period obscured to such a pitch by her disorder as to be forgetful of the anxiety oppressing the soul of her spouse. Mr Hastings has also done his utmost to minister to this merciful oblivion, never approaching his lady but with a cheerful countenance and some trivial or agreeable discourse, and refusing to allow the conversation to turn upon public matters. This morning, before he left to attend the Council, he gratified her with the present of a necklace of very fine topazes—a gem to which she is particularly addicted—and this pretty attention bade fair, as I hoped, to divert her mind from the question before the Board. But she considered herself sufficiently recovered to admit a visit from Lady Day, who is recently returned with Sir John from a sojourn with Mr and Mrs Ross at Chinchura, and that volatile though charming creature was so unwise as to confide to her that to-day Mess. Francis and Wheler were to give their answer to the proposition laid before them on Monday by the Governor-General. From

that moment my poor mistress was all anxiety, enquiring perpetually if Mr Hastings was not yet returned, and hardly able to await his arrival when the approach of his retinue became audible. To heighten her apprehension, he did not at once seek her chamber, as he has been wont to do, and the black woman Sukey, on being sent to make enquiries, returned with the reply that the Burra Saub was in his *dufter-kauna*[1] with Markham Saub. Mrs Hastings looked at me in positive terror.

"What is he doing?" she cried. "Hester, go—I command you—and see what has happened. Go to de office. Say I sent you for dat second volume of 'Lady Julia Mandeville'—dat I could not wait for him to finish reading it to me. Go quickly; I insist upon it."

So frantic was her anxiety that I could not refuse, though such an errand was contrary to every rule of the family, and I approached the office with great timidity. Mr Hastings was seated in his chair dictating to young Mr Markham in the most equable voice in the world, and I had almost returned to inform Mrs Hastings that her fears had played her false, when certain words struck upon my ear with a terrible significance:—

"My authority for the opinions which I have declared concerning Mr Francis depends upon facts which have passed within my own certain knowledge. I judge of his public conduct by my experience of his private, which I have found to be void of truth and honour. This is a severe charge, but temperately and deliberately made, from the firm persuasion that I owe this justice to the public and to myself, as the only redress to both, for artifices of which I have been a victim, and which threaten to involve their interests with disgrace and ruin. The only redress for a fraud for which the law has made no provisions is the exposure of it. I proceed to the proofs of my allegation——"

"If I might be permitted to hazard a word, sir?" interrupted Mr Markham, laying down his pen.

"How, Will?" asked Mr Hastings, with that paternal air which so much endears him to the gentlemen of his family; "am I the Grand Lama or the Great Mogul, that you display such timidity in criticizing the style of my compositions?"

[1] *Daftar-khana*, office.

"'Twas the matter, rather than the manner, sir. With all submission, has it occurred to you that by this minute you leave Mr Francis no choice between an active resentment and the incurring of perpetual disgrace if he remain silent?"

"I must commend your discernment, child. That's precisely what I desired to do. Things can't remain as they are, and either Francis or I must give way." Mr Hastings spoke slowly, with the deliberate calm of the man of gentle disposition and amiable temper goaded to an unnatural severity by a long course of unprincipled opposition. "If I kill Mr Francis, my conscience is clear of all but an almost criminal leniency towards him; if he kill me, at least he can't succeed to a post which has devolved to him in so dreadful a manner, and Mr Wheler, mediocre though his talents may be, is honest, and, possessed of that support from his employers which they have never accorded me, may succeed where I have failed."

At this frightful confirmation of Mrs Hastings' fears, I could not refrain from some movement or exclamation, I know not which, that betrayed my presence to the Governor-General. He turned in his chair, then rose and approached me with an aspect of so much displeasure that I could hardly confront him while I stammered my excuse of the book Mrs Hastings desired.

"I will do myself the honour of bringing it to her presently," he said, in the coldest voice imaginable. "Kishenram!" he summoned a black servant from the varendar, "attend Beebee Ward back to the apartments of the Burree Beebee."

Such was my state of confusion and alarm, that I could not succeed in concealing what I had heard from Mrs Hastings, but her undaunted spirit rose triumphant over both her bodily weakness and her mental apprehension.

"Sit down and write a chitt to Sir John Day, Hester," she commanded me. "Bid him come hither to morrow morning without fail, on a matter of life and death. Give de chitt yourself to de head chobdar, and let him despatch de swiftest hircarra with it immediately. Quick! before Mr Hastings comes in."

I had but the time to obey her before the Governor-General

entered, with a countenance still displeased, and laid upon her couch the volume for which she had sent me.

"At another time, my Marian, be good enough to despatch the servants upon your errands. They know no English."

"Alas, Hastings! do you design to hide your intentions from your poor Marian? What has she done, thus to lose your confidence?"

"My confidence I trust she will always enjoy, save when she endeavours to force it."

"Hastings, you trive me to distraction! Why dis coldness, dis averted visage? I know! You seek to divert my mind from dis design of yours, but I won't be diverted. You are resolved to expose to destruction de most precious life in Bengall."

"My Marian, your conclusions are too hasty. Have you ever known your husband act without due deliberation? He is resolved on nothing, but the execution of his duty."

"Den let him tear up dat minute he has been dictating."

"Not even at his Marian's command. He may not have occasion to use it, but he'll keep it as a weapon in case of necessity."

"You are killing me, Hastings! What! will you see your Marian expire of apprehension before your eyes? Cruel!"

"My Marian, don't agitate your tender frame with these transports, I entreat. Come, I will promise patience—prudence—to the verge of pusillanimity. Can you not trust your husband?"

"Will you promise me to do nothing—say nothing—until you haf seen Sir John Day?"

"If that will calm your mind, be assured I will."

"Den come now and read to me from 'Lady Julia Mandeville.' I can't spare you again dis evening."

CHAPTER XVI.

A DUEL.

BELVIDERE-HOUSE, *July ye 3rd*, 1780.

The last three days have been a busy period for poor Sir John Day, who has displayed all that obliging readiness to *put himself out* for his friends that has won him the title of the Good-natured Man. First he made us a visit before dawn on Saturday morning, in much apprehension, summoned by Mrs Hastings' billet of the night before, but was prudent enough not to convey to Mr Hastings the fact that he had been sent for. He received with much concern the intelligence that Mess. Francis and Wheler, not even condescending to allude to the Governor-General's offer to take upon himself the additional expenses of the military movement he proposed, had again refused their assent to it, in a minute of the most insulting character imaginable. Hopeless though the situation might appear, he was sanguine of appealing to Mr Francis' sense of honour, and inducing him to consider the obligation by which he had bound himself, thus preventing the disagreement from becoming a total rupture, and in this view he accompanied the Governor-General to Calcutta in his palanqueen.

Mr Francis being absent at Sirempore, the mediator could do nothing that day, but on the Sunday succeeded in obtaining sight of him, with the sole apparent result of hardening him in the attitude he had thought fit to assume. With an unparalleled effrontery, Mr Francis demanded the complete postponement of Major Camac's expedition until the receipt of advices from England to determine the future course of this government, which may not arrive for two months or more. Should Mr Hastings again be confirmed in his present situation, Mr Francis offered his solemn promise to oppose no further objection to the movement, ignoring, with all the indifference in the world, the fact that by this course the period of the rains would be lost, within which our forces can act, but the Maratta cavalry can't. Dis-

daining to rely a second time upon an assurance so little worthy of confidence, Mr Hastings returned an abrupt and peremptory refusal, declaring that the accommodation concluded in February was good enough for him, if it were observed with sufficient fidelity to enable him to afford General Goddard that support which he had in mind in framing it.

This refusal Sir John carried this morning to Mr Francis, supporting it with a lively remonstrance on his illiberal behaviour, and the unhandsome appearance it would present to the world. This criticism on the impropriety of his conduct Mr Francis combated at first, though with little spirit, but presently acknowledging himself ill, observed that he doubted but the influenza was upon him, when he would be compelled to withdraw himself from the settlement for the recovery of his health. In that period, said he, the Governor-General was at liberty to carry by means of his casting vote such measures as he desired; for himself, he was only anxious not to appear as assisting in acts to which he could not conscientiously assent. The respectable mediator returned in high good humour with this result, but Mr Hastings, displaying a tenacity which his opponent can hardly have anticipated in him, insisted also on the withdrawal of all the minutes contributed by Mess. Francis and Wheler since the order for Major Camac's advance was drawn up a fortnight ago. With some unwillingness, since Mr Francis appeared to be in great pain, and he was reluctant to disturb him, Sir John undertook this new errand, and returned with the joyful intelligence of success, which no one welcomed with more complacency than poor Mr Wheler, who is the most obliging of men when not subjected to the disagreeable influence of his colleague. The minutes on both sides being accordingly withdrawn, the Governor-General proposed the order for Major Camac's advance, (which passed without a murmur from Mr Wheler,) and carried Sir John Day back with him to this place, rejoicing to have it at length in his power to offer a suitable response to the entreaties of the gallant Goddard.

The evening passed in the most agreeable manner, a weight appearing to be lifted from the minds of the entire circle, and my dear Mrs Hastings, in particular, felt her spirits so much

raised that she was able to occupy a couch set for her in a pavilion in the garden, where she received with all the complacency imaginable the compliments of the respectable inhabitants of the vicinity, who crowded to offer their felicitations upon her recovery. The Governor-General, though never for a moment tempted to a distance from his lady, was the life of the party, over whom his sportive humour and unassuming benevolence shed a mild and cheering radiance, and it was with the utmost astonishment that we heard him say, after bidding farewell to his guests,

"My Marian, these agitating scenes are too much for your delicate spirits, and I purpose transporting you to a distance from 'em. We go up the river this week to make a visit to the excellent Croftes at Sooksaugur, and in coming down we will see whether the society of your friends at Hoogley and Chinchura won't assist towards restoring you to health."

"Heavens, Hastings! am I a state prisoner?" cried his lady. "For how long do you purpose tragging me out of my own house?"

"Until I have *tragged* you back to health, my Marian. The vicinity of Calcutta is no place for you at present. The voyage to Sooksaugur will set you in a fair way to recovery, and your cure will be completed by the assiduous care of Mrs Ross and the sprightly conversation of your fair friend Beebee Motte."

"While you are left to boil or bake or roast —whatever you will—in Calcutta?" cried Mrs Hastings. "I vow I won't move one step!"

"Then I am sorry, since I had promised myself the honour of escorting my elegant Marian on her journey."

"What, you will take holiday? you will attend me all de time? By all means let us start to-morrow."

"Pray, Mrs Ward, vouchsafe me a testimonial of my skill in managing the ladies. Yes, my Marian, your husband intends inflicting his company upon you for ten days at least. He will only leave you in the hands of your friends."

"Den you purpose returning without me—to Council? Hastings, you shall not! Nefer will I suffer you to be in Calcutta at de same time as Mr Francis with your Marian absent!"

"My Marian, be reasonable. Have you not heard Sir John say that Mr Francis himself is going up the river for his health? If he goes to his friends at Chandernagore, you will be far nearer him at Hoogley or Chinchura than I at Calcutta."

"Will you tear up dat minute you dictated to Markham?"

"An't all the minutes already withdrawn, my dearest?"

"Not dat one—de minute dat was never delivered, dat you prepared for to-day's Council. Will you destroy it?"

"No, my Marian, I will not. I cannot now have that confidence in Mr Francis' honour which would impel me to throw away any weapon that might be needed against him. But reassure yourself. That minute will never be used if the present happy state of affairs continue. Only some fresh instance of bad faith on Mr Francis' part will tempt me to employ it Be content with that. Would you have me leave myself defenceless?"

At Mr Ross's, Chinchura Factory, *July ye* 31*st*.

More than three weeks are elapsed since we quitted Belvidere, and my beloved patroness is now almost in her usual health—which is the more to be desired because of the constant apprehension that she may shortly require an uncommon measure of fortitude. I can't believe that she has for a moment forgot her fears on Mr Hastings' account, which were displayed to me in the most affecting light shortly before our departure. In a *sundook* in the strong-room at Government House she had a hundred gold mohurs stored up, which Mr Hastings proposed to borrow of her for the purposes of the journey, observing that the treasury was so empty he could not draw his salary. Her agitated refusal piqued him not a little, and astonished me; but when he had left us, she turned to me with the tears in her eyes.

"You don't see, Hester? You also misjudge me? Ah, do you not perceive dat he may at any time be forced to fly suddenly—to seek refuge on board de ships? Is he to be penniless? He has no store of money, de Gentoos would haggle and make delays in raising it, but dis will be ready for him, and he may yet be thankful for de unobliging disposition of his Marian."

No further reference was made to the matter, and an agree-

able tranquillity marked the stages of our journey, the indisposition of Mr Francis securing the Governor-General a brief period of respite from the assaults of his malignity. Our progress up the river was attended with the most gratifying tokens of respect from the different foreign settlements, salutes of twenty-one guns being fired from the forts of Sirempore and Chinchura as our train of budgerows proceeded in the direction of Sooksaugur. This is a sort of experimental plantation, if I may so style it, commenced by Mr Hastings before his marriage for the purpose of introducing new sorts of plants and trees into Bengal, and now carried on by Mr Croftes, whose official situation is that of Accountant-General, a line for which his tastes are less fitted than for agriculture. There is a convenient garden-house in an elegant style of European architecture, surrounded by grounds disposed with the greatest of taste, and raised higher above the inundations natural to the season than either Calcutta or Allypore, and Mrs Hastings would have been satisfied with far less agreeable accommodation while she knew that the Governor-General was safely employed in examining the progress of his coffee-bushes. She saw him depart to be present at Council on the 13th of the month with the less apprehension that we were assured of Mr Francis' absence from Calcutta, and set out on the 20th to join him at Chinchura without alarm. Her confidence was justified by an earlier meeting than she could have anticipated, for Mr Hastings, setting out as soon as Council was over on that day, passed Chinchura, and came upon us in the most disagreeable situation imaginable, his lady's budgerow having run aground off Nya Serai,[1] a sort of island the greater part of which is overflowed at this season. Captain Sands, who was in attendance on Mrs Hastings, could effect little with the small force at his command; but the arrival of the Governor-General, with his gentlemen and servants, placed a new complexion on the affair. We were transferred on board his budgerow while our own was extricated from the mud, and but for the marshy air of the place, which affected Mrs Hastings for near a week, suffered little.

[1] Dr Busteed says that Nya Serai was on the Calcutta side of Hugli, but it is much farther up the river, close to Suksagar.

In the course of our progress down the river, however, I received from Mr Maxwell the most disquieting intelligence imaginable. Mr Francis had wrote in a very violent style from Chandernagore to Mr Wheler, disavowing the withdrawal of the minutes, and protesting that he had only consented to it on condition that Major Camac and his force were strictly confined within the limits of the province of Ghode! The minutes were accordingly replaced, and the Governor-General had taken the momentous step of entering also that stringent one which I had heard him dictate. Poor Sir John Day, aghast at the perfidy of Mr Francis, had journeyed to Chandernagore for the purpose of addressing him a remonstrance, but arrived there only to find him gone up the river, in quest, as it's believed, of Sir Eyre Coote, who is coming down from the upper provinces, and whom he trusts to unite with him in a league for the entire destruction of Mr Hastings. For the credit of the good old General, I may add that he shows every intention to avoid the meeting, and it is considered that Mr Francis will find his labour lost.

The Governor-General having attended Mrs Hastings to this place, and confided her to the care of the Hon'ble Johannes Matthias Ross, the Dutch agent, and his lady, was forced to quit her again almost at once owing to his duties at the Council. On Thursday morning she received from him the most agreeable letter imaginable, its themes relating so exclusively to her concerns that the writer would appear to have no other interest in the world. I was favoured with the sight of this elegant composition, which caused me an extreme pleasure, for the tenderest enquiries and directions as to my patroness's health were accompanied by such items of general intelligence as might divert her mind, the epistle bringing also the news of Mr Hastings' impending return to Chinchura, and his assurance that there was no bad news of any sort. The relief it brought to me as well as to my patroness was unbounded, though we could not determine whether the hostility of Mr Francis had in some miraculous manner been disarmed, or whether he was resolved to retire from the contest, and we hastened to rejoice our worthy hosts with our news. Ignorant of our reasons for anxiety, and therefore

for relief of mind, they yet displayed the most charming unanimity in welcoming another brief visit from the Governor-General, and showed him the most distinguished honour on his arrival.

CHINCHURA, *August ye 14th.*

Our stay here is passing in the most agreeable manner, a great portion of our time being spent upon the water, cruising up and down the river in the yacht. Mr Hastings, less fortunate, has paid tribute to the atmosphere of Calcutta by an attack of the common disorder, since his last visit here. For a whole week he was unable to preside at Council, (his first absence from such a cause for six years,) but peremptorily forbade his gentlemen to acquaint Mrs Hastings of his indisposition, of which she knew nothing until he was recovered. On Friday night he again arrived, with a small attendance, to pass the Sunday here. Nothing was said of a distressing character until yesterday, when, as is usual here on Sundays, the principal avenue of the settlement, leading from the church door to the gate of the Agent's compound, served as a parade after service for a genteel company. Mr Ross leading Mrs Hastings, Mr Hastings Mrs Ross, and various of the chief inhabitants of the place and visitors from Hoogley following in a suitable order, the Mall, as it might be styled, presented an agreeably diversified aspect, and such as extorted the admiration of the lower sort of the population, who flocked to look on. Though so near Calcutta, the climate of this place is so far superior as to permit of walking even at this season, and the Dutch gentlemen have been wise enough not to adopt that absurd convention current among us, which despises as a *white blackfellow* any person preferring the use of his own feet. My cavalier was Mr Maxwell, and to him I chanced to pass the remark that our apprehensions before embarking upon this journey had in an extraordinary degree failed of being justified.

"I an't so sure of that, ma'am," says he. "Mr Francis passed down the river on Friday."

"Alas!" I cried. "What will come of this?"

"Only one thing can come of it. Mr Hastings desired me this morning to do him the favour to see that his pistols were cleaned."

"But sure he need not design to use them himself. He may intend a pair merely as a present—to Mr Ross, questionless."

"He has but the one pair, ma'am—very finely ornamented, and presented to him by some friend."

"And he intends to challenge Mr Francis?"

"No, ma'am; I presume Mr Francis, as the party aggrieved by Mr Hastings' minute reflecting upon his candour, will send his seconds to wait upon him. Pray don't suspect me of betraying Mr Hastings' confidence in saying this, for he desired you should be acquainted what was impending, that you might be the better able to shield Mrs Hastings from disquieting rumours, without revealing the matter to Mr Ross and his lady."

"But is there nothing can be done to stop it?"

"On my honour, ma'am, I believe there an't. Mr Francis is returning fully resolved to revenge himself upon Mr Hastings for thwarting him in Camac's matter, and Mr Wheler is dragged, however reluctantly, at his chariot-wheels, while there's no dependence to be placed on Sir Eyre Coote. It's common talk that Mr Francis bases his repudiation of his engagements on the improbability of his ever having entered into 'em, which is sufficiently apparent, except on the supposition that he designed to break them. Mr Hastings, confiding in his honour, drew up no written agreement, considering that Sir John Day's evidence would suffice to determine any point that might be doubtful, since on the main stipulations there could be no question, and Mr Francis—backed in this by Mr Wheler—swears that an understanding which is neither reduced to writing, signed, sealed, nor witnessed, has no force in law. Therefore the gentleman's conscience is free."

"But," I cried, "in face of an opposition so unscrupulous, and an alternative so horrible, sure Mr Hastings would best consult his own peace of mind by retiring from a situation in which his services are so poorly appreciated?"

"That, ma'am," says my companion, with a grimness that nearly forced a laugh from me, "is precisely the opinion of Mr Francis, and to that step he hopes to drive him. But that step Mr Hastings won't take, regarding himself with justice as the only person in whose hands the British dominion in India has

the least hope of surviving. Left to himself, Mr Francis would first of all alienate the Berar Marattas, whose Pindarries would now be ravaging our territories up to the very walls of Fort William but for Mr Hastings' delicate handling, and Moodajee's esteem for him. Next he would conclude a peace, on any terms, with the Poonah Administration, and despatch fresh embassadors to cringe to the Nizam and Hyder Naick. When he had withdrawn all our troops from distant expeditions within our own borders, and parted with all the acquisitions we have made since my Lord Clive first set foot in India, he might declare himself satisfied, careless that our foes would then unite to expel us altogether."

"But how, then, can Mr Hastings bring himself to hazard his life, and expose the settlements to this very peril? An't it possible to seize Mr Francis and convey him on board the ships, and so have him deported to England, like an interloper?" This I said, remembering Captain Richardson's words on my first landing.

"How, ma'am? a second Pigot affair? Mr Hastings by such an action would but justify all the slanders of his enemies, who brand him as ready to override both law and right when he finds his own interests threatened. His sole redress is that of any private character."

"A redress in itself illegal!" said I. "And to avert de struction from the charge committed to him, he must risk his own life, and incur, possibly, the guilt of the murderer!"

"Why, ma'am, do you think there's a gentleman of his family but would gladly have picked a quarrel with Mr Francis, and fought him in Mr Hastings' stead? But as I have heard him say, how would it advantage him at home to have it said that he had removed an enemy from his path by means of a hired bravo? He will take the risk, and should his fire unhappily prove fatal, surrender himself without delay to the Sheriff."

"Alas!" I cried, "how unseemly would be the triumph of the Judges to find the Governor-General in their hands for an act committed in his private character! How would such a misfortune improve matters, sir?"

"I don't know, ma'am; but I presume they can't in any case

be worse than they are. A wound sufficient to disable Mr Francis for a month or two—that's what we must hope for—nothing dangerous to life."

"But sure Mr Hastings has not that skill with fire-arms which might ensure this?"

"He hasn't fired a pistol above once or twice in his life, ma'am—he told me so himself—and I believe it's much the same with Mr Francis. But even though they should both miss, the affair may serve its purpose by warning Mr Francis that there's a point beyond which he can't go. Sure he forgets the inconsistency of his present behaviour with his conduct in the Nuncomar affair. If 'twas true then that he and his associates feared for their own lives in face of the fury of a violent despot who had proved by a judicial murder that he would stick at nothing to maintain his ascendency, how can he have the temerity to force the same person again to desperation?"

"To tell truth," said I, "he has never yet perceived that Mr Hastings' mild and yielding demeanour conceals a deliberate purpose. He believes still that if he is pressed sufficiently hard he will give way."

"In that," says Mr Maxwell, "the gentleman will find himself mistaken before this week is out."

. . . . . .

Even had I not received warning from Mr Maxwell, my observation of Mr Hastings' demeanour at his departure early this morning would have convinced me of the dangerous character of the situation. He betrayed no turmoil of spirits, maintaining his usual easy politeness, but he appeared incapable of bringing himself to quit his lady's side. Again and again he returned up the stairs to assure himself once more of her health, to entreat her not to omit any of the medicines prescribed by Dr Jackson, to warn her against over-exertion or exposure to the evening air. I could have hoped she had not perceived anything extraordinary in his solicitude; but when he had descended the stairs for the last time, still looking back and reiterating his recommendations, she catched at her watch-chain with a cry.

"De key of de *sundook!* Run after him with it, Hester! If efer he needs de money, 'twill be now."

I took the key from her, and obeyed, reaching Mr Hastings just as he was stepping on board his budgerow.

"This key, sir—from Mrs Hastings!" I gasped.

"What! has she guessed?" he cried.

"I don't know, sir—I trust not—she can't but be anxious."

"Then will my friend Beebee Ward do her utmost to soothe that anxiety? Will she see that no alarming rumours penetrate?"

"She will try, sir, indeed. But may she not venture to entreat Mr Hastings not lightly to hazard a life so precious to his country?"

"Precious it may be to her whom I esteem most dearly, and to a few kind friends, but to my country——! Pho! ma'am, to his country Warren Hastings is but a troublesome fellow who will neither die decently nor permit himself to be damned peaceably,—a good riddance!"

"Then, sir, for your lady's sake, and that of those humble friends whom your condescending kindness has unalterably attached to you, guard your precious life!" and I hastened back into the house, overcome with emotion. I heard Mr Maxwell assure me as I passed him of his punctual fulfilment of my commands, and this gave me a little comfort, as promising the most swift and certain intelligence possible. Considering that he would be the most probable messenger for any news of moment, I gave him last night my Devonshire brown scarf, to be displayed in a prominent situation in the forepart of his budgerow if the news were bad, while his own white handkerchief is to proclaim it good. This house being situated on the extreme bank of the river, (so that its lower apartments are often flooded in the rains,) and surrounded with balconies and bow windows overhanging the water, 'twill be easy for me to distinguish his approach.

CHINCHURA, *August ye 15th.*

A brief epistle from her spouse, dated last night, reached Mrs Hastings this morning. Though sadly out of spirits after a tiresome voyage, the Governor-General, with his usual kindness, hastens to inquire of his lady for a remedy that may benefit poor Mr Naylor, who has never recovered from the hardships of

the prison, into which he was thrown by the arbitrary decree of the Judges. While relieving the anxiety of Mrs Hastings by assuring her that he has met nobody and heard nothing, he mentions in a casual style a piece of news of the worst possible import. In a letter from Madras, containing the news of the arrival of the Company's ships at that port, he is informed that the present unfortunate situation is to be perpetuated. The post of Governor-General is secured to him so long as he desires it, but Mr Francis is also continued in his situation of Councillor. This removes the last hope of an accommodation by peaceful means, for the posture of affairs is now intolerable. This being evident, my efforts are now bent to shielding my patroness from the knowledge that Mr Francis is returned to Calcutta, which is no easy task, Mr and Mrs Ross displaying so much complacency in waiting upon her perpetually and cheering her with their conversation. In directing the discourse to other topics when it approaches this dangerous point, I receive the most obliging assistance from Sir John Day, who is also staying at this place in attendance upon his lady, whose health is sadly feeble.

CHINCHURA, *August ye 17th.*

At length we know the worst—or ought I rather to say the best? Our excellent Mr Hastings is unharmed, while his opponent is deprived, as we trust, of the opportunity of mischief for some time. During these three days I have been occupied unremittingly in watching for the arrival of a messenger from Calcutta, but none of the budgerows that approached the Gaut bore the signal which I had agreed with Mr Maxwell to display. To-day, however, I was taken by surprise by the appearance of Sir John Day during the hours sacred to the noontide repose, and by his request to be conducted immediately to the presence of Mrs Hastings. Hearing his voice in the varendar, she desired him to be admitted at once, when he presented her, after a brief preface, with a billet which was just arrived under cover of one to himself by one of the Governor-General's hircarras. This billet my patroness has permitted me to copy, observing how deeply I was affected by its contents.

"CALCUTTA, *Thursday morning.*

"MY DEAREST MARIAN,—I have desired Sir John Day to inform you that I have had a meeting this morning with Mr Francis, who has received a wound in his side, but I hope not dangerous. I shall know the state of it presently, and will write to you again. He is at Belvidere, and Drs. Campbell and Francis are both gone to attend him there.

"I am *well* and *unhurt*. But you must be content to hear this good from me; you cannot see me. I cannot leave Calcutta while Mr Francis is in any danger. But I wish you to stay at Chinchura. I hope in a few days to have ye pleasure of meeting you there. Make my compts. to Mr Ross, but do not mention what has passed. My Marian, you have occupied all my thoughts for these two days past and unremittedly.—Yours ever, my most beloved, W. H."

Mrs Hastings and I mingled our happy tears over this epistle, and Sir John took his leave with the greatest delicacy, promising to wait upon my patroness again the moment that he was able to bring any further news.

CHAPTER XVII.

A THUNDERBOLT.

CHINCHURA, *August ye 23rd*, 1780.

The agitating yet gratifying communication received by Mrs Hastings through Sir John Day was followed the next morning by another, entrusted to the care of Mr Motte. Mr Hastings wrote with a calmness equally removed from remorse and from triumph, barely alluding to the duel more than to repeat that he could not quit Calcutta so long as Mr Francis was in any sort of danger, lest it should be considered a flight; but he entreated his lady not to terminate her visit on his account. From Mr Motte, however, we obtained all the information he

had been able to collect, having done this with great difficulty, such was the secrecy observed. On Monday evening, the 14th, when Mr Hastings arrived in Calcutta, he enclosed his hostile minute at once in a chitt and despatched it to Mr Francis, not chusing to surprise him with it for the first time at Council. The next day, when the business of the Revenue Board was concluded, Mr Francis took the Governor-General aside into an unoccupied room of the Council-house, and read to him a challenge in very formal terms. Mr Hastings expressing his willingness to accept it, Mr Francis intimated that he would desire Colonel Watson, the Chief Ingenier of the Presidency, a person of large fortune and superior abilities, but a bitter and determined opponent of the Government, to attend him on the occasion. On his part, Mr Hastings desired the services of the excellent and attached Colonel Pearse, inviting him to breakfast with him on the Wednesday, when he acquainted him of what had been fixed for the following day.

On Thursday Colonel Pearse waited upon his principal in his chariot early in the morning, and carried him to the place of meeting, which was on the borders of Mr Hastings' own estate of Belvidere, where they found Mr Francis awaiting them with Colonel Watson. The preliminaries were settled by the two military gentlemen, neither of the principals having any experience in affairs of that nature, but discovering, nevertheless, a calmness and resolution such as did honour to both. Some delay having occurred in fixing upon a suitable spot, the combatants took up their station at a distance of fourteen paces, and were desired to fire as nearly as might be at one time. Mr Francis, having some doubt of his pistol, delayed firing twice successively, and his powder being discovered to be damp, he was furnished with fresh from a spare cartridge by Colonel Pearse. The gentlemen then returning to their stations, the word was given, and Mr Francis fired without effect; but Mr Hastings aiming very deliberately, his fire took place, the bullet entering Mr Francis' right side, and striking upwards, lodging near the backbone at a point where it could easily be extracted. Mr Francis crying out that he was a dead man, Mr Hastings ran to him with all the solicitude in the world, and continued

to assure him of his hopes for his recovery while he assisted the military gentlemen to bandage the wound. Refusing to lay aside his resentment, Mr Francis was with difficulty induced to allow himself to be conveyed to a room at Belvidere-house until he could be attended by a surgeon, and displayed so much impatience at this trespassing on Mr Hastings' hospitality that the physical gentlemen thought it expedient to remove him the same day to Major Tolley's house near by. It may be unreasonable to expect in the vanquished that degree of urbanity which sits so gracefully upon the victor; but I venture to believe that had Mr Hastings been the sufferer from this meeting, he would have displayed a more forgiving spirit. As though to assure Mr Francis of his desire for a reconciliation, he despatched Mr Markham that very day to enquire when he might be permitted to wait upon him, only to receive through Colonel Watson a formal reply to the effect that Mr Francis felt it impossible to receive his visit. This has since been made plainer still by an intimation of Mr Francis' desire to meet the Governor-General in future only at the Council-board.

That Mr Hastings feels deeply this cool rejection of his amicable overtures I can't doubt, and therefore it's all the more delightful that at this very moment his political foresight should have been justified in the most striking manner. Captain Popham, over whose small and poorly-equipped force raged the commencement of the dispute which led eventually to the duel, has exceeded even the anticipations of his indulgent patron by making him master of the universally renowned fortress of Guallier. This place, which is situated in the dominions of Mahdajee Scindia, and was occupied by a garrison of that prince's troops, is called the key of Indostan, and has hitherto been regarded by every Indian as absolutely impregnable. It is now fallen before the attack of three battalions of Seapoys drawn from different regiments, commanded, it's true, by British officers, but suffering under all the disadvantages of the season, and at a prodigious distance from their base of supplies. For two months the adventurous commander occupied himself in the study of the situation and defences of the place, deriving also a knowledge of the interior from the reports of the spies furnished

by our ally, the Ranna of Ghode, and, when his plans were completed, the huge fortress was stormed in the most artful and deliberate manner, our troops being in possession of the place before the garrison could even be roused to resist them. The intelligence was carried back to the Jumna, and thence brought by relays of express hircarras to Calcutta, where it arrived the evening before last, causing the most intense joy. Mrs Hastings and I were roused yesterday morning by a message from Mr Ross that his sentinels could distinguish the firing of the guns of Fort William, this showing that some event of importance had occurred, and before we were dressed there arrived a hircarra from Mr Hastings, bringing the news. Later advices show that a wholly indescribable effect has been produced upon the Indians, all their chief personages crowding to offer their congratulations to the Governor-General, not with the perfunctory civility that so often distinguishes these ceremonies, but inspired with a genuine enthusiasm. Mahdajee Scindia himself is reported to have exclaimed, on hearing the news, "Sure these English can effect the impossible!" And this extraordinary piece of success was obtained by an officer so junior in the army that all the military body had protested against the unprecedented favour shown him, and by a force against which Sir Eyre Coote had inveighed in the cruellest terms as unfit for any practical purpose. Of this abuse from the capricious veteran less would have been heard, had it not served Mr Francis as a text in his endeavours to thwart Mr Hastings in his support of General Goddard, but both the prophets of evil are reduced by the event to a reluctant and impotent silence.

BELVIDERE-HOUSE, ALLYPORE, *Sept. ye 20th.*

At the request of her spouse, no less than at her own desire, Mrs Hastings is at length returned to the vicinity of Calcutta, and I find myself able to resume what Mr Maxwell, with a good-natured raillery, styles my political studies. The principal figures of our state occupy once more their ordinary positions, Mr Francis finding himself quite recovered, or at least to such an extent as to be able to take his seat in Council, and display the most deadly malignity towards the Governor-General, even while all

the forms of an extreme courtesy are observed between them. "If the man could lay Mr Hastings dead at his feet with a glance, be sure he would do it," says poor Sir John Day, who finds all his well-meant efforts of the early part of the year betrayed and ridiculed by the person in whose interest he acted. Will it be credited by future ages that Mr Francis disclaims any responsibility in the matter of Mr Barwell's return home, denies the terms on which the accommodation was arranged, and, in the most cynical manner imaginable, intimates that he would have considered himself a fool had he entered into any such compact without securing a very solid and handsome advantage for himself? In face of this disingenuous behaviour, the credulity of Sir Eyre Coote can only be regarded with pity. The good old General, now returned from his visit to the upper provinces, bustles about with the greatest assiduity between the two parties, assuring everybody that had he been in Calcutta, matters had never come to so sad a pass.

Intelligence of a gratifying nature continues to arrive from the Malabar Coast, where General Goddard has gained fresh successes; and Mr Hastings, equally cheered and justified by the capture of Guallier, awaits only the cool weather to support him by a further strong diversion on this side of the Maratta territory. At this juncture, however, when the military prospects are so bright, he is limited in the most cruel manner by an absolute want of the means necessary to realise them. The Maratta War, which Mr Francis and his supporters, with the most barefaced mendacity, persist in styling *the Governor-General's war*, has drained the treasury, and it has been found necessary to resort to the mortifying expedient of inviting loans at the current rate of interest. But if this moves the animadversion of Mr Francis, what would be his language if he was aware, as we of the Governor-General's family are, that in order to avert a further danger that he sees impending, Mr Hastings has been forced to contract a loan on his own private account with a wealthy Gentoo called Raja Nobkissen? The imminence of this danger lies in the fact that Moodajee Bounceloe, the ruler of Berar, still maintains upon our frontier the army which his alliance with Hyder and the Nizam obliged him to raise and

move against us, but in an inactive state. Should their pressure upon him be increased to the point of threatening his kingdom, he could no longer preserve that neuter attitude to which his esteem for Mr Hastings has impelled him, and the necessities of his unpaid troops would force him to hurl them upon the territory of Bengal. With this emergency in view, Mr Hastings has obtained command, at his own risk, of the sum of three lacks, with which he can at once purchase the gratitude of Moodajee and the support and suffrages of his mercenary soldiers, if the potentate finds himself hard pressed. The power of thus keeping Berar neuter, if not securing it as an active ally, is not too dearly bought, even at such a cost; and Raja Nobkissen has displayed a proper sense of the gravity of the situation in entreating Mr Hastings to accept the three lacks as a gift. Before his mind, as before the minds of all those who are not merely attached to the British dominion, but anxious for peace and a settled government, hovers the spectre of that project of Hyder's to destroy the whole fabric of English influence in India by a general alliance of the country powers. A short breathing-space and a sufficient supply of money — these are the Governor-General's needs to enable him to deal with the Marattas before he can be attacked by Hyder as well. Heaven grant he may attain them!

And it is the man thus struggling against overwhelming odds that is opposed not only by hostility in his own Council, but by deliberate defiance from those subordinate to him. Now, when the pacification, or at least the mollification of the Deccan powers is a matter of life and death, the Select Committee of Madras are pleased to seize the moment to irritate Hyder and the Nizam afresh. Not satisfied with the manifold provocations already heaped upon the latter prince, they propose refusing the subsidy due from them to him, with the result that he has expressed himself convinced that they intend a declaration of war. Mr Hollond, their agent at the Nizam's court, had the courage to write and warn Mr Hastings of this, with the result that the Committee immediately suspended him from their service with ignominy, on the ground that he had betrayed their secrets to an external government! Mr Hastings replied by appointing

Mr Hollond his agent, and assuring the Nizam that justice should be done him, but the Madras gentlemen have so far returned no answer to the letters informing them of these steps. This attitude of their raises the gravest fears as to their possible action, since they appear to be destitute of a sense of shame, as is shown by their appointing their Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hector Munro, to a seat in Council—a distinction to which he had no claim—solely for the purpose of securing a majority. To such characters what baseness is impossible?

Here at Allypore, we need know little of these public apprehensions, the usual gaieties and diversions occurring as usual. Mr Wheler, who is now recovering his spirits after the sad loss of his lady, is established at the Gardens, and displays the utmost complacency in all social commerce, so that it is believed the period of Mr Francis' indisposition was fruitful in opening his mind to the true disposition of the Governor-General, which had so long been misrepresented to him. Parties of pleasure are arranged perpetually to Sirempore, Chandernagore, Chinchura, or Bandell, with the saving clause *after the next heavy shower of rain*. After the extraordinary severity of the hot weather, the rains have displayed a similar excess, so that the roads are in many places impassable, and a considerable number of old houses are dissolved into ruin; but here we see little of these inconveniences. I can't resist recording one gratifying fact in connection with the ascendant my dear patroness has obtained over the entire community of Calcutta. Her mode of dressing the hair, without powder, cushions, or other assistance, which was at first so violently reprobated, is now become the fashion, and where you saw a dozen caps in full-dress three years ago, you will now only discover one, and that worn by an elderly lady. This testimony is unconscious; but with that due sense of her situation of which she is never destitute, Mrs Hastings exacts a certain propriety of conduct in all who approach her. She is now accorded the utmost deference in every company, and all the ladies may be observed regarding her with an eager respect until favoured with a recognition, before receiving which, by the sentiment of the community, it an't proper to engage in any conversation.

BELVIDERE-HOUSE, *Sept. ye 22nd.*

I write this late at night, for our stay here has proved short beyond all anticipation, and in view of an early departure on the morrow, I am desirous to indicate the new blow which is fallen upon our state. There was no expectation of anything of the sort until supper-time, when Mr Hastings was summoned from the meal by the news that a swift-sailing ship from Madras was arrived in the river, and the Governor-General's private pacquet had been sent on by hand. Instead of returning to his place, he sent presently to request the attendance of Mr Wheler, who with two gentlemen of his family was a guest at the meal, and finally, thinking it vain to await him longer, Mrs Hastings desired the company to move into the saloon. Nothing but the example of my patroness could have enabled me so to control my anxiety as to assist her by making up parties for loo and trédille, and attending Lady Chambers to the harpsichord, where she desired me to turn over her music for her. Not until the guests were about taking their departure did Mr Hastings return, when he apologized in the most genteel manner for his rudeness as he handed the ladies into their chariots or palanqueens, but said nothing as to the reason of his absence. Even then I believe Mrs Hastings' patience would have allowed her to wait until the gentlemen of the family were retired to their quarters, but the Governor-General detained them with a motion of his hand as they were about to disperse.

"I will make no secret to you, gentlemen, of what will be a matter of public knowledge to-morrow," he said. "In the case of the Madras Committee, no news is bad news. Hyder has overrun the Carnatic, the Madras army is destroyed, the Committee panic-struck. They desire our aid to save them from extinction."

"Oh, dear sir, how can such horrors have happened?" we all cried.

Mr Hastings spoke slowly, moving about the chamber with his eyes cast down. "Three months ago Hyder quitted his capital at the head of a hundred thousand men, and marched against Madras," he said. "Before the end of July his cavalry were within nine miles of the Mount, while the gentlemen of

the Committee were quarrelling who should repel the invasion. Sir Hector Munro's vote—so I am informed by my young friend Mr Stephen Sulivan, the bearer of the pacquet—was too precious for him to be spared from Council, and my Lord McCloud,[1] a King's officer, newly arrived from home, was invited to take command of an army possessing neither stores, equipment nor transport. With an admirable good sense he declined the responsibility, though willing to support Sir Hector with his regiment, provided due provision was made for the requirements of the campaign. With that contempt for the strength of the enemy which has so often cost us dear, no provision was attempted. Munro marches out as far as the pagoda of Conjeveram, to which he clings with a resolution as criminal as it was absurd, and waits to be joined by Colonel Baillie and his force from the Guntoor Circar. You'll observe that that force had not yet been recalled, in spite of our stringent orders sent to Madras. Poor Baillie, bewildered with contradictory orders, first to march to the Mount, then to Conjeveram, arrives in sight of the pagoda, but finds Hyder in his front. In response to an urgent message, Munro sends him a reinforcement of a thousand men, which reaches him safely, and he seeks to avoid the Mysoreans by a night march. Hyder has enfiladed the whole road with artillery and planted his infantry in ambush everywhere, and at the first fire Baillie determines to halt till daylight. Fatal resolve! enabling Hyder's son Teepoo to seize the ground in front of him. In the morning our unhappy troops were surrounded on the banks of the Pollilore Nullah by the entire Mysorean army, which they repulsed repeatedly. In spite of his seventy canon, Hyder would have retreated but for the exertions of Mons. Lally and the other French officers with him. A movement—even a feint—on the part of Munro would have saved the day, but it was not made. By some unhappy accident, two of Baillie's powder-tumbrils exploded, depriving him at once of artillery and ammunition, yet with his men formed into a square he repulsed thirteen attacks from Teepoo's cavalry with the sword alone. At length, exhausted and despairing of success, he accepted the prince's invitation to

[1] McLeod.

surrender, only to behold the survivors of his force cut down in cold blood, the exertions of Hyder's French officers to save them prevailing only in a few cases. Then—can I utter it? I have lived to behold the retreat from Tullygaunj and the disgrace of Worgaum, but this is more disgraceful still — then Munro moved at last, but meeting Baillie's fugitive camp-followers, their panic spread to him. My Lord McCloud went on his knees to him to allow him at least to rescue his Highlanders, who had formed part of the reinforcement, but in vain. The precious pagoda, for the safety of which so much had been sacrificed, was abandoned, the guns and stores thrown into the great tank, the ammunition blown up, and the hero dishonoured for ever by a precipitate retreat the laurels gained at Buxar. He was pursued by Teepoo's cavalry as far as the Mount itself, and all the garden-houses on the Choultry Plain were plundered up to the walls of Madras. Think of it, Marian! That fertile region ravaged with fire and sword, its inoffensive inhabitants brutally massacred, or swept into an odious captivity by the insolent soldiery of Hyder!"

"But what of Madras itself?" cried Mrs Hastings.

"Why, Stephen Sulivan tells me that the inhabitants have all put on mourning, and that Munro is hooted in the streets," said Mr Hastings drily; "also that the Admiral's family have left, and that Whitehill's and the General's are expected to follow, and that the Mallabar traders are selling their goods under cost so as to get away the faster. But as for taking any measures to retrieve the position, beyond quarrelling in Council over the allotment of their respective shares of blame, the Madras gentlemen appear to think their duty done by the composition of the frantic letters they have despatched to me, demanding troops and cash, stores and provisions, without delay."

"But, sir," said Captain Palmer warmly, "these wretches have disobeyed your orders, defied your authority, insulted your agents. Sure they haven't the assurance to seek your assistance now?"

"Sure they know me better than you do, Palmer. They have sought it, and they must have it. Pray, Maxwell, why that load of gloom upon your countenance?"

"Sir, the plan of repaying insult with assistance is noble, and worthy of Mr Hastings. But how is it to be carried out when the treasury is empty, and all our resources pledged to the prosecution of the Maratta War? It can't signify——"

"It signifies," cried Mr Hastings, with a sort of fierce groan, "that the Maratta War must cease, that we must offer the Marattas such terms as they will accept to end it. It signifies the recall of Goddard, Popham, Camac—the loss of all our recent acquisitions, and the pouring into the Carnatic of every man, every rupee, every *seer* of grain we can scrape together! Do you take me, gentlemen?" looking round at the dismayed countenances of the group. "In the Maratta War we are fighting for an equality, but this struggle with Hyder is for existence. Our empire in India hangs by the thread of opinion; and to suffer the Mysorean's insolence to go unchecked until he can be joined by the French is to unite every prince and power against us from Dhely to Trichinopoly. If I have to stop the Company's investment, the thing must be prevented."

All were silent, touched to the quick by the Governor-General's renunciation of his proudest hopes, and his readiness to take even so momentous a step, and he turned suddenly to his lady.

"I have a request to make of my kind Marian, and I trust she won't refuse it to me."

"You need not utter it, Hastings. You desire we should remove into Calcutta, dat you may be at hand always."

"Far from it, my dearest. I desire you to give our friends Mr and Mrs Motte the pleasure of making them a visit at Hoogley. I must remain in Calcutta for the present, but I won't expose your delicate constitution to the dangers of this unhealthy season. Come, my Marian won't increase her husband's trials by adding to them an anxiety for herself? She'll allow him to attend her up the river, and leave her in the charge of Mrs Motte and our kind Beebee Ward?"

"If you ask de sacrifice of me, Hastings," replied his lady faintly, "I won't refuse it. But neither will I suffer you to escort me to Hoogley: Hester and I will make the journey unattended."

"My Marian, if you refuse my company you force me also to make the journey alone. I have summoned a Council for Monday, for I would not have it meet to-morrow, under the influence of the panic that will be spread by the public advices of the disaster. Wheler's assent I have already secured for the measures I propose, and in going up the river I design to make the Commander-in-Chief a visit at Ghyretty, and obtain his approval also. Then Francis may teaze as he likes on Monday, but can do no harm."

"Will you assure me de journey is necessary for you—dat you won't be blamed for it?"

"My Marian knows that certain persons would blame me whatever I did or left undone. But she may take it from me that this little jaunt, ill-timed as it may appear to her, will be of the greatest service, in enabling me not only to secure the General, but also to mature my plans in readiness for Monday's Council. Some orders I can despatch at once, on my own responsibility, but the greater part I may only draw out and wait for them to be approved."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A MISSION.

At Mr Motte's, Hoogley House, *Sept. ye 2°th*, 1780.

We have been favoured this evening with a visit from Mr Maxwell, who waited upon Mrs Hastings on his way up the river to Berhampore, our military station near Muxadavad, on an errand for the Governor-General. He brought the gratifying intelligence of the astonishing effect upon the dismayed and desponding Presidency of the calmness and resolution of Mr Hastings, and the adoption by the Council of all the measures he proposed. In presenting his plans to his colleagues, so unmoved was this great man's tone in referring briefly to the

Madras disasters and the imminent danger of the approach of a huge French armament, so affecting his appeal to the Commander-in-Chief to stand forth and in his own person vindicate the honour of the British arms, that even Mr Francis found himself for once at a loss to reply. Never, surely, has a person in such a responsible situation displayed so much readiness as Mr Hastings to incur risk, reprobation and rebellion for the sake of rescuing from destruction a community from which he has received nothing but insult. He proposed withdrawing the whole of the treasure, deposited in Fort William as an appropriation for extraordinary occasions, so as to complete the sum of fifteen lacks to be despatched at once to Madras for the purposes of the war; to reinforce the helpless army of that Presidency by a large detachment of European infantry and artillery, placing Sir Eyre Coote in supreme command; to request Moodajee Bounceloe to use his good offices in negociating a peace with the Marattas on the basis of a return to the situation existing at the commencement of the war, and to desire the Poonah Government to enter into an alliance with the British against Hyder Ally Cawn and the French. Not until the next day did Mr Francis, already disturbed by the evident defection of Mr Wheler from his cause, bring forward his objections, which are currently reported to have included a strong recommendation for the withholding of all assistance, either in troops or money, from Madras, and the retirement of the Bengal Government within the walls of Fort William, there, if necessary, to stand a siege until help can arrive from England! To this Mr Hastings is understood to have replied that Bengal could only be defended in the Carnatic, and this by means of attack rather than defence. For the money needed, he would take upon himself to suspend the Company's investment, and to raise a loan for the prosecution of the war, secure of the support of a majority of his colleagues. This proving to be the case, it's whispered, says Mr Maxwell, that Mr Francis withdrew from the Council-board in the most extreme displeasure, declaring that the Government was riding headlong to the devil, and he would make no further efforts to stop them.

"'Tis even said," added the young gentleman, "that Mr Francis designs returning home this season, but that I can't vouch for."

"Heaven grant he may!" cried Mrs Hastings. "Perhaps it will sufficiently disgust him to see dose measures carried out which he opposed. When are dey to take place, sir?"

"Why, ma'am, before he attended you hither, Mr Hastings sent orders to Captain Nutt of the *Duke of Kingston* to be ready to sail for the Chorromandel Coast in five days; but the captain swears he's all unrigged, and no water aboard, so that he can't start for a fortnight, and in this he's supported by the masters of the other ships. It's feared the force won't be able to leave until three weeks from the arrival of the news." Mr Maxwell spoke with a certain gravity.

"But sure dat's de most extraordinary speed! You must not expect too much, sir. Will you be returned from dis journey in time to see de General depart?"

"I—I believe so, ma'am. My errand is but to warn the commanding officer at Berhampore to maintain a greater vigilance against French spies, of whom the Presidency is reported to be full."

"Den you have no orders to visit Muxadavad[1]?" I wondered that Mrs Hastings did not perceive the extraordinary distress, so obvious to myself, with which Mr Maxwell spoke, but she was pursuing a thought of her own. "You are not to pay your respects to Munny Begum?"

"Why, no, ma'am. Sure Mr Hastings had chose a different messenger had he intended him so delicate a task."

"Sure Mr Hastings nefer thought about it at all! Oh, why am I here, where I can't remind him? Will you become my messenger, Mr Maxwell, and convey my compliments to de lady?"

"Indeed, ma'am, I should be highly honoured, but Mr Hastings expressly desired my immediate return."

"Ah, you military gentlemen, with your exact obedience! Well, sir, Mrs Ward and I are indebted to you for dis visit. You will repeat it on your way down de river, in case I have any letters to send?"

[1] Murshidabad.

"I won't fail to wait on you, ma'am," and Mr Maxwell bowed himself out. For some minutes after his departure my patroness sat in silence, then turned suddenly to me.

"Hester, I have a plan. I shall go myself to Muxadavad, and make Munny Begum a visit."

"Oh, dear madam!" I cried, much disturbed, and wondering what this sudden resolution could portend. "Do you purpose availing yourself of Mr Maxwell's attendance, ma'am?" I ventured to add.

"Certainly not," replied Mrs Hastings, with a resolved air. "For de Governor-General's lady to proceed on a journey of such magnitude attended only by a single aid-du-camp would be monstrous improper. I will go in a private manner, without any attendance at all."

"Not secretly, ma'am? Sure you can't intend——"

"I will repose confidence in Mrs Motte, by all means. As to Mr Motte, I am doubtful. He is so often in Calcutta dat he might find it difficult to parry Mr Hastings' questions."

"Oh, ma'am, you wouldn't take so responsible a step unknown to Mr Hastings? Dear madam, suffer me to entreat you——"

"My good Hester, don't be a fool. Would Mr Hastings permit me to lower—as he would think—my punctilio by taking ever so slight a step to conciliate in his interests dis Moorish princess?"

"But how would you keep the matter from him, ma'am? You could only conceal your absence from your friends here by alleging illness, and that in itself would cause Mr Hastings the most cruel anxiety, even if he didn't throw aside all his occupations to make you a visit."

"Sure I would leave a letter for him. No," she continued, with a whimsical smile, "dat would only bring him up de river in pursuit, with all his train of guards and aids-du-camp, and sufficient stir to arouse de dead. Behold all my hopes of secrecy overthrown, and de whole Presidency buzzing with scandal! No, dat would not do. But I won't give up my plan. Hester, if I an't to go, you must."

"Oh, ma'am!" I cried, more confounded than ever. "But why?"

"To convey my respects and a genteel present to Munny Begum, and acquaint her of de grave posture of affairs. Mr Hastings has supported her interests all dese years, and never received from her more than de most ordinary compliments! She is de richest female in Bengal, and may well repay de protection and countenance she has received."

"But, ma'am, it's forbidden! And Munny Begum! Can you have forgot that the wretch Nundocomar based his infamous calumnies on a lying tale of presents received from this princess?"

"De tale was a lie, as you say. And a gift for de public service——"

"Oh, ma'am, pardon me, but will you place Mr Hastings by your own act in a position of such frightful danger? Will you rejoice Mr Francis with such a tale to take home with him? Sure the bitterest dart aimed at the Governor-General would then have been pointed by her who——"

"By his Marian. Hester, you are a fool, but you have a good heart. Dere must be no question of a gift of money. A loan—do you perceive?—de woman must be encouraged to contribute to dis fund Mr Hastings is raising. She must have hundreds of lacks laid by—buried in sundooks under de zenannah floor, questionless."

"But am I still to go, ma'am?" I asked, with a sinking heart.

"Have I not said it? Mr Motte shall find you a budgerow, I will lend you my black girl Molly, and a banyan shall be in charge of de expedition."

"But Cawntoo Bobboo must account to Mr Hastings for his absence——"

"Did I say Mr Hastings' banyan? I will send one of my own banyans—Gopalldass is at hand, and will be secret and trustworthy."

"But—but—ma'am——"

"Hester, you are afraid. What is de meaning of dis foolish timidity?"

"Indeed, ma'am, I don't know, unless the safety and comfort I have enjoyed in travelling under your protection have turned me into a coward."

"But what is dere to fear? You enter a well-appointed budgerow for a voyage of less than two days. At Muxadavad Gopalldass makes all de arrangements—provides a palanqueen and bearers. You step from de budgerow into de palanqueen, are conveyed to de palace in de most perfect secrecy and comfort imaginable, receive de honour of an audience, and return in de same manner, descending de river again with de consciousness dat you have effected more in one visit than our Agent at Muxadavad could do in a lifetime. What! you still hesitate—you who so frequently parade your devotion to de interests of Mr Hastings? Hester, I hadn't believed it of you!"

"Oh, dear madam, spare me! I long to go, but this foolish terror—— But your commands are sacred to me."

"I give no commands. I offer you de chance of furnishing Mr Hastings with assistance dat's of de most vital importance to him. If you refuse it, I have no more to say."

"Oh, ma'am, I will go—I will. Pardon this cowardly delay. Your own greatness of mind relieves you from the terrors which beset meaner creatures. But I will tread them under foot. I will go."

"Dat's my Hessy—de Hester I had always flattered myself I possessed! Go, den, my Hester, invite de attendance of de amiable Mrs Motte. We must at once admit her to our confidence."

HOOGLEY-HOUSE, *Oct ye 5th.*

After a week which I have difficulty in persuading myself is not the most terrible in my life, I take up my pen once more in my own chamber in this hospitable abode, which I had given up all hopes of beholding again. My errand is performed, although my patroness, in despatching me upon it, made choice, with absolute innocence of intention, of the most unfortunate instrument imaginable, and the worthy Gentoo entrusted with its furtherance went about his business in the most maladroit style. I took my departure from Hoogley the very morning after I had been informed of Mrs Hastings' wishes, Mrs Motte providing a plain budgerow, without any marks of rank, the cabin of which was allotted to me and my companion, the negress (or as she is called here Coffreess,) Molly, and the forepart to Gopalldass.

This venerable Gentoo is one of the banyans to whom Mrs Hastings entrusts the conduct of her monetary affairs, which she retains in her own hands, and manages with a skill and coolness that I have often heard admired, since she distrusts the prudence in such matters of her spouse. I carried with me the dress of a respectable Moorwoman, also procured by Mrs Motte; but was resolved to retain my own clothes for the voyage, though this confined me necessarily to the cabin, except at night, or at such parts of the river as were unlikely to be frequented by other travellers. The voyage was sufficiently free from disagreeable incidents, though I could not resist amusing myself with wondering what would have been the feelings of the young gentlemen of Calcutta, had they known that the lady they are pleased to admire was proceeding up the river with an extreme reluctance and alarm, under the sole protection of a timid, though obsequious, Indian.

The force of the current at this season of the year is such that it was only with the most extraordinary exertion that the rowers effected the voyage in two full days, so that it was morning when we arrived at Muxadavad, anchoring in an inconspicuous situation off the Gaut of an acquaintance of Gopalldass. It was then necessary for me to keep myself strictly secluded during the day, while the banyan went on shore to arrange for my reception that night by Munny Begum, who is widow to Meer Jaffeer, the late Nabob of Bengal, and acted for some years as regent during the minority of the present prince, Mobarruck-ool-Dowlah, his son by another lady. Owing her elevation to this post to the good offices of Mr Hastings, who had conceived a high idea of her spirit and understanding, the lady has never forgotten her obligations to him, and displayed an affecting fidelity even when his fortunes were at the lowest ebb—a virtue which is sadly rare in this region. Polite compliments have passed on several occasions between her and Mrs Hastings, and Gopalldass anticipated little difficulty in inducing her to admit a visit from the confidential female attendant, (thus I was described,) of the Governor-General's lady. When he returned from his mission, however, it appeared that a certain amount of difficulty had confronted him, though not from the lady herself,

but from one of the negroes who, nominally slaves, are frequently found occupying a situation of the greatest power and intimacy in the households of these Moorish potentates. A monstrous large present was necessary to induce him to withdraw his opposition; but what disquieted me far more than this was the Gentoo's confession that, either to enhance his own importance in the negro's eyes, or with a view to deriving some sort of protection, he had allowed it to be understood that he was the embassador of the Governor-General himself. Since it was too late to withdraw the imprudent avowal, I could only trust that the negro, whom Gopalldass believed to be at the moment out of favour with his mistress, might be destitute both of the power and the will to effect any harm by means of it.

As soon as night was fallen, the budgerow was brought close to the Gaut, and I stepped into a palanqueen, followed by Molly, carrying the presents designed by Mrs Hastings for the princess. A cloth was thrown over the top and sides of the machine, as is done when native females of quality ride abroad, and we were carried off, guarded by a sufficient number of men armed with swords and bucklers, whose services Gopalldass had obtained from his friend. The stifling heat, combined with the roughness of the journey and the uncertainty of the situation, made our progress very disagreeable, and I was thankful when, peeping through a crevice, I was able to distinguish, by the torch of the *mossoljee* who preceded us, that we had quitted the streets of the city, and were traversing a piece of waste land of considerable extent, full of rubbish-heaps, which I knew must be the grounds of the palace. Passing through several ruined gateways and deserted courts, the bearers set down the palanqueen and retreated through a passage, and Molly, who was gone fast asleep, woke and *lumbered* out to make sure, after the Moorish custom, that there were no men to be seen before I emerged. Two negroes, very richly dressed, but with a hideous cast of countenance, awaited us, and these conducted us through a further labyrinth, one going in front and one behind, Molly following me with the presents. To accord with Moorish manners, these gifts should each have been carried by a separate attendant, and set out on trays with embroidered coverings, so as to display them to the

best advantage, but not possessing a sufficient retinue, I was forced to huddle them all into Molly's arms. Arriving at length at a small enclosed garden, one of the negroes, whom I guessed to be the opponent of Gopalldass, remained behind, with a sulky air, and the other conducted us alone, taking occasion to inform me that his mistress had never quitted this confined space, (I guessed it to be not more than an acre and an half, so far as I could discover by the lamps that marked its extent,) since the death of her spouse, near twenty years ago. On my demanding in astonishment how she could perform the duties of regent when thus secluded, he told me that she had entrusted these to her chief slave, Itbar Ally Cawn, the predecessor of the negro we had just left behind, whose administration had caused the greatest discontent among the people, all desiring that the Begum, hidden behind a curtain, should hear suitors in person —an expedient frequently adopted by ladies in her position. On my asking why he had not pressed this advice upon her, he gave me to understand that in such a case he would have forfeited his life to Itbar Ally Cawn, and that the matter was in the hands of destiny, not his.

Arriving at a fine open apartment, separated from the garden by a verandah with pillars, I saw at first only a curtain of scarlet silk, stretched tightly from side to side, with no light behind it. Prompted by the negro, I advanced to this curtain, and, standing in the light of the lamps, performed several times over the deepest obeisance of which I was capable. I had gathered that the Begum was concealed behind the curtain, but it was not without a start that I heard an order given in a harsh voice, and saw the obstacle suddenly disappear. Hearing myself announced in a sufficiently odd style, as "the servant of the daughter-in-law of the Honourable Mrs Company," (for the Indians believe the Company to be an elderly female, blessed with many sons, of whom my Lord Clive and Mr Hastings are two, so that Mrs Hastings is naturally the lady's daughter-in-law,) I advanced towards the principal female figure in the apartment, and endeavoured to perform the ceremony called *suddombozee*, which consists in kissing her foot, or rather, touching it with the hand, and kissing that. The Begum graciously refusing the civility, I

presented her with five gold mohurs in an embroidered handkerchief, which she touched and returned to me, inviting me to be seated upon a cushion. Thus established, I had leisure to observe the figure and surroundings of this extraordinary woman, who from the situation of a dancing-girl was raised to that of a queen, without possessing, so far as I could perceive, either beauty of person or attraction of manner. Confessing to forty-six years of age, she is short of stature and of an excessive corpulence, her complexion very dark, (which is disliked by the Moors as much as by ourselves,) her features large and coarse, her voice distressingly vulgar. Her dress was of the utmost magnificence, being a gown of the very finest muslin, worn over under-garments of a silver stuff, and worked in gold thread. The skirt, which was plaited very full, flowed all round her as she sat cross-legged on her cushions, and mingled with the gold-worked muslin of her head-dress. Her shoulders and bosom were covered with many rows of the finest stones, pearls, emerals, and rubies of an extraordinary size, but all rough and uncut, and bored to hang on a string like children's beads. For earrings she had a great bunch of pearls, strung in the same way, and her fingers and toes were adorned with prodigious rings. Observing that I waited to be addressed, she spoke to me in the most affable style, desiring to know whether I was sufficiently acquainted with Moors not to need an interpreter, and testifying an extreme pleasure that this was so, though I could not pretend to a knowledge of the Persian, which is the more polite language. I thought the moment favourable for the presentation of the gifts sent by Mrs Hastings, and took them in turn from the hands of Molly, as she knelt behind me—a jar of West India sweetmeats, of about five pounds' weight; a muslin scarf, worked by my patroness with her own hands; a fine gold watch, the back enamelled very curiously in the French manner, and other elegant trifles. The Begum received them with an almost childish delight, in particular displaying the most extravagant pleasure in the watch, and desired me to explain them all for the benefit of the female attendants who stood or sat on the carpet behind her.

Having delivered the presents to the especial charge of a con-

fidential servant, she engaged me in discourse in an agreeably familiar style, regretting that I had worn a Moorish habit out of compliment to her, and much desiring to see me in a European dress. I could only reply that I would endeavour to satisfy her Highness at some future period, when Mrs Hastings might be able to gratify her constant desire of making her a visit in person, and this turned her mind to the subject of the Governor-General and his lady, concerning whom she asked me an endless string of questions, not all of them of the most delicate. Her curiosity partially satisfied, she delivered over to me the gifts she had prepared for Mrs Hastings, a pair of very fine shawls, a large piece of kingcob from Guzerat, (the richest sort, with gold and silver flowers on a ground of silk,) the four feet of a bedstead, carved in ivory, and a small quantity of the finest ottar made in Indostan, contained in a philagree bottle, itself sewn in a silk bag, lest the perfume should escape. Sweetmeats were then served, and gifts brought in of a good piece of sprigged muslin and a handsome bracelet for myself, since it was observed that I wore no jewellery. Then the Begum returned to her questioning, dealing now with the affairs of the Carnatic, of which the most confused and alarming reports had reached her. When I had imparted to her the true state of affairs as far as I thought prudent, she spoke in the highest possible terms of Mr Hastings, and informed me that she designed him a present of two lacks of sicca rupees. I was in a difficulty to acquaint her that this was impossible without affronting her, and when I had couched my speech in the most acceptable language I could frame, she imagined that the gift was insufficient, and declared the sum she had intended was three lacks. In an extreme embarrassment, I pointed out that the laws of the Service, and the jealousy with which these were applied, forbade Mr Hastings to receive such a gift, but that his anxieties for the public good would be appreciably relieved, if the Begum would invest the sum in the new loan. She then changed her tone in the strangest fashion, displaying a quality I have sometimes observed even in Europeans, a reluctance to lend even a smaller sum than she was willing to give outright. The utmost she would promise was to consider the matter; but her affability

returned by degrees, and when she sent for the ottar and *paun* which mark the termination of an interview, she showed me the highest possible honour by holding out the dish with her own hand and desiring me to help myself—an honour which I appreciated the more that it enabled me to escape taking more than a very slight portion of the *paun*. Then the negro reappeared, and with renewed obeisances Molly and I departed, our ears deafened with the shrieks of a myna, a sort of talking bird which had sent the Begum into fits of laughter several times during the audience.

Half-way through the garden we were met by the second negro, who appeared to remind our guide of some omitted duty, and to volunteer to conduct us to the gate himself, for we were delivered into his charge. We had almost reached the door of the enclosure when, turning hastily round, with the air of one recalling something forgotten, he said that Bubboo Begum, the Nabob's mother, hearing of our visit to Munny Begum, desired that I would make her a visit also. As Mrs Hastings had foreseen this contingency, and provided me with a second present, of less value, in view of it, I proposed returning to the palanqueen for the articles. The negro, objecting that it was late, suggested Molly's fetching the presents, under the guidance of another slave whom he summoned, while I went on with him to the abode of the second Begum. To this I agreed, and accompanied him through a door on the opposite side of the garden, and across another piece of ground covered with ruins, walking with difficulty in the unaccustomed dress and loose slippers. Coming presently to a range of buildings, still of a ruinous character, a door was opened. Tormented with the impossibility of seeing where I was going, and at the same time keeping the veil over my face, I stumbled on the threshold, and immediately a European voice said in English,

"Enter, sir; you are expected."

Heavens! for whom did they take me? I tried to draw back, but found myself seized by the arm and dragged through the doorway. The door was slammed, and I felt a pistol at my head, while the voice cried,

"Give up whatever weapons you possess, or you are a dead man!"

I experienced a horrid sense of familiarity with the voice, but I was too much startled to do more than stretch forth my hands and protest vehemently that I had no weapons. In doing this, the veil fell from my face, and I saw a small vaulted chamber, dimly lighted, with two men in European dress confronting me with drawn swords, while he who had closed the door menaced me with the pistol. At the sound of my voice, one of the swordsmen called out angrily, and seizing one of my hands, held it up to the light.

"We have been fooled!" he cried in French. "'Tis a woman!"

"Not the aid-du-camp?" cried his companion. "Then Lootf Ally has betrayed us!"

"Gentlemen," I said in a trembling voice, collecting my scattered senses and speaking in my best French, "have the kindness to permit me to depart. I am a European, and this dress was assumed merely in compliment to the Burree Begum, to whom I have made a visit of ceremony. How I have been so unfortunate as to intrude upon your private conference I don't know, but since we may meet in the future in happier circumstances, I trust you'll be so good as to let me go away unknown."

This desperate appeal to that chivalrous temper upon which the French so greatly pique themselves had almost succeeded, but the third man, whose voice had seemed familiar, cried out—

"What if it be a woman? She's a spy of Hastings', no less than the man we expected. And I'll wager I know the woman, too!"

He stooped and peered into my face, while I drew back from him trembling. It was my cousin, Mr Alexander Haines.

"Put your questions, gentlemen!" he cried in French, with a horrid laugh. "This is the confidant and favourite of Madam Hastings, and you can guess her errand here."

"You alarm the lady, sir," said one of the Frenchmen. "Pray, madam, believe that we intend you no harm. Do us

the honour to take a seat on this fragment of masonry—the best chair we can offer—and indulge us with a few moments' conversation. The most trivial matters interest those who have not had the felicity of meeting a European female for months."

But I declined his civilities, remembering the harm that had resulted from an easy conversation three years ago with Mr Francis. Lest I should reveal anything of moment, I would say nothing at all.

"Sir," I said, "I have already entreated you to allow me to depart. I don't find myself in the humour for conversation."

"Alas, madam! will you compel me to force a lady's tongue? Must I say to you, as I had intended saying to the gentleman whose place you appear to have taken, that persons have been killed in this chamber, and their bodies buried under the floor, before to-night?"

I made no answer, realising in a moment that, misled by the imprudent expressions of Gopalldass, and aware of Mr Maxwell's visit to Berhampore, they had concluded him to be the emissary who was to seek in disguise an audience of Munny Begum. In a sense, then, I was fallen into this danger in his stead.

"You can't leave this place alive, unless you answer the questions I put to you," says the Frenchman.

"Why, then, sir, I must die," I said, speaking with more calmness than I felt. But as I had half expected, they hesitated to murder in cold blood a female for whose presence they had not been prepared, and it was left to my wretched cousin to intervene.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the lady is a relative of my own, who escaped from my mother's care after a severe illness, in which her intellects were for the time disordered. With your permission, I will restore her to that safe asylum, where she may remain until she perceives the advantage of complying with your request."

"Well done!" says the Frenchman, with an air of relief. "Your abode is sufficiently secret, I presume?"

"I would defy even the Chief-Justice's myrmidons to discover it," replied Mr Haines. "You have yourself to thank, ma'am," he added to me, "for you had us driven from Buxerautgunga

Pray, sir, allow Mons. Perron to request Lootf Ally to furnish us with a palanqueen and bearers."

"Oh, sir," I cried, as the second Frenchman quitted the apartment, "don't condemn me to an imprisonment worse than death! If you knew the cruel outrages I have endured at the hands of Mr Haines and his family, you could not subject me again to the risk of them."

"Why, madam," he replied, "the remedy's in your own hands. A few minutes' conversation, and you leave this room a free woman. Two or three particulars as to General Coote's force, and the intended disposition of the fleet, that's all I want."

I thought of the French officers with Hyder's army, and the huge fleet of Count d'Estaing, laden with troops for his support, and I knew why these particulars were desired. I was trying to devise some means of combining a refusal with a further appeal, when the second Frenchman returned, announcing that the palanqueen was ready. Without a moment's delay, my cousin clapped his hand upon my mouth, and assisted by this fellow, forced me out of the building and into the palanqueen. As I sank upon the mattress, half-dead with terror, the principal Frenchman approached, and said in a low voice,

"You're a brave woman, ma'am, and I give you a word of warning. At present you are in the hands of Europeans—relatives, at least; but cry out, or attempt to engage the attention of the city watch, and you'll fall into the clutches of the Nabob or Mahomet Reza Cawn. Therefore I recommend silence."

I understood him, and made no attempt to call out as I was carried once more out of the palace and through the streets. My sole hope was that our way might lead to the river, and yet how small was the chance that in the multitude of small boats I could distinguish my own budgerow in the darkness, or that Gopalldass would have the courage to come to my assistance if I succeeded in summoning him! Still, I experienced an intense relief when the sound of the rapid current at length became audible, and the palanqueen was carried on board a boat and deposited on the deck. But my spirits fell again sadly when I perceived that we were proceeding down instead of up

the river, since the Gaut of Gopalldass's friend was situated almost at the northern limit of the city. Then, lest I should be overwhelmed with despair, the recollection was vouchsafed me, surely direct from Heaven, that unless our voyage ended before we reached them, sailing in this direction we must pass the cantonments at Berhampore, and that within a very short distance, since the currents and sandbanks near the opposite bank force all vessels passing this point to hug the shore, as the seamen say. So overpowering was the agitation that seized me that it was with difficulty I controlled myself sufficiently to enquire what I could do when we were abreast of Berhampore, but it was plain to me that I must first be able to perceive when the place was reached. A ray of light, piercing at the moment through the most minute hole imaginable in the painted cloth covering the palanqueen, gave me my opportunity, and as soon as I could discover the hole, I set to work enlarging it cautiously with a pin from my gown. My cousin and the inferior Frenchman were keeping watch on either side of the palanqueen, as I could distinguish by hearing their shoes on the deck, but in the darkness they could not perceive what I was doing, and when my hole permitted me to distinguish the moving figure of a man obscuring the stars, I worked no further. I could now perceive scattered lights on the shore, which were questionless those of the houses of Muxadavad, but after a considerable distance without any illumination at all, during which I knelt with straining eyes fastened to my hole, there was a fresh display of lights, and these so much more powerful and regular in their arrangement, that I could not doubt we were approaching Berhampore. How intense was my longing that this evening might be the occasion of a public ball, a theatrical performance, or any other festivity that might bring the Europeans of the place down to their Gauts and afloat in their budgerows! But the river-bank showed nothing of the kind, and as our boat glided past, (for the rowers had drawn in their oars, for the sake of silence, and were merely drifting with the current,) land and water alike might have formed part of a city of the dead. An agonized prayer burst from my overcharged bosom as we approached the southern extremity of the station.

With help so near at hand, was I to be powerless to profit by it?

As the conviction forced itself upon my mind that this was indeed so, a sudden glare of light almost blinded me. At the Gaut we were about to pass a budgerow lay at the steps, with the rowers ready to start. On the steps stood two Europeans in a military undress, and above them were the mossoljees whose lights had dazzled my eyes. I gathered all my strength. "Help! help!" I cried, but my voice sounded so weak, even to myself, that I wondered to see the gentlemen turn and look at the river in surprise.

"Quiet, you fool, or I'll kill you!" cried my cousin, stumbling against the pole of the palanqueen as he rushed to silence me, and in that moment I saw the face of the European who stood on the lowest step of the Gaut. No angel from heaven could have been more welcome.

"Help, Maxwell! budgerow!" I shrieked, before Mr Haines could recover himself sufficiently to stoop at the door of the palanqueen and thrust a great mass of rags in my face. When I succeeded in disengaging myself, the rowers were at work again with all their might, and the uneven motion of the boat showed that we were striking across to the opposite shore. Behind us was another boat, for I could distinguish the cries of the *serang* as he urged on his rowers, and I even fancied that I could recognise another voice than his. There was no mistake; a European voice, but not Maxwell's, was ordering our boatmen to stop, but almost before I had realised this, I was conscious of the most violent shock. The palanqueen appeared to be lifted high in the air, and then to plunge frightfully into unknown depths, there was a rushing sound of water, and I recognised that in order to save themselves, my captors had hurled me into the waves. The action was not so atrocious as might appear, since the pursuing boat was not far off, but I entertained no doubt as to my fate, and only wondered that the process of drowning should be so slow. The truth was, however, that the palanqueen, from which the heavy painted cloth had slipped as it was thrown overboard, was floating, having admitted an astonishingly small amount of water, and would questionless have

continued to do so until the mattress became sodden. But my endurance was not put to so severe a test, for the second budgerow came up very quickly with my novel vessel, and I was dragged on board by the joint exertions of Mr Maxwell and the elderly officer I had seen with him.

I am ashamed to pay the tribute to female weakness of confessing that the moment I found myself safe upon the deck I burst into so uncontrollable a passion of weeping that I could not utter a word, and thus I remained for some minutes, Mr Maxwell adjuring me in the most moving terms to calm myself and believe that I was with friends, while his companion stamped with impatience as he fruitlessly demanded the author and the reason of my abduction. When at last I succeeded in uttering the words "French emissaries," he broke away, cursing, in tones which may have been more audible than he designed, the time consumed in pulling me out of the water, and rushed to lavish threats and promises upon the rowers, desiring them to redouble their efforts to overtake the fugitives. I catched at Mr Maxwell's sleeve.

"Dear sir," I faultered, "what must you think of me—finding me at this hour and in this region, my situation so alarming, and in this horrid dress? And I can offer you no explanation, for my errand is not my own."

"Have I demanded an explanation, ma'am?" he asked. "Or don't Mrs Ward yet believe that in my eyes no action of hers needs justification? If her own good heart and the natural softness of her temper lead others to take an undue advantage of her good nature, the fault lies with them, not with her."

This had an alarming sound, as though he had guessed the whole of my errand; but I was afraid either to contradict or to corroborate his civil remarks, lest I should confirm his suspicions and direct them towards Mrs Hastings. I was happily saved the necessity of a reply by our coming suddenly upon the fugitive budgerow, now forsaken by Mr Haines and the Frenchman, who had questionless made their escape in a smaller boat. On board were only the crew and an obsequious Gentoo, who swore by the most sacred names of his religion that his boat had been violently seized by two European gentlemen, who had

forced him at the sword's point to convey them and a female of their company down the river, and on being pursued had escaped to the opposite bank. Pursuit being useless in this quarter, on account of the thickness of the *jungul*, the old officer, whom I found to be Colonel Ahmuty, commanding at Bankypore and now on a visit here, could only demand the name and residence of the Gentoo, and leave him with many terrific threats. Having now leisure to remember me, he made haste to offer the shelter of his *bungilo*, the services of a physician, an escort for the return journey, and other civilities, but taking courage from the thought that nothing could render my situation more singular than it must already appear in his eyes, I remained firm in the request that a messenger might be despatched to summon my budgerow and attendants, when I would resume my voyage immediately. Mr Maxwell supported me in this, divining, as I could not but suspect, my anxiety lest my mission should become known at Berhampore, and promised that his budgerow should perform the journey in attendance on mine, thus ensuring my safety without a further escort.

While I endeavoured to snatch a couple of hours' repose, thankful that my Moorish dress had suffered little from the water, Colonel Ahmuty despatched an express hircarra to find Gopalldass and bring down the budgerow, Mr Maxwell and he keeping guard over my slumbers with drawn swords, so he assured me. But indeed I slept but lightly, tormenting myself with wondering what explanation Mr Maxwell might be offering the Colonel of my appearance in such a place, and—I am ashamed to say it—wondering also whether his confidence in me was in reality so complete as his words seemed to imply. Before I had satisfied myself on this point, my own budgerow was arrived, and the gentlemen commending me very civilly to the care of Molly, whom the night had rendered almost stupid with surprise upon surprise, I returned thankfully to my own cabin, and heard the boat put off from the Gaut.

CHAPTER XIX.

A SEPARATION.

HOOGLEY-HOUSE, *Oct. ye 7th*, 1780.

How different was my situation during the return voyage from what it was in my journey up the river! Then I was in a constant apprehension, as much of the dangers of the voyage as of what lay at the end of it; now my mind was filled with gratitude in reflecting upon the perils I had passed through, and I experienced a pleasing confidence in the protection assured me for the way. At the full purpose of the plot that had threatened me we could only guess, but Molly and Gopalldass were united in the belief that they were intended never to behold Hoogley again in the event of my disappearance. Having re-entered the palanqueen in order to be conveyed with the presents to the second Begum's courtyard, Molly, as I suspect, went to sleep, and did not awake until she found herself set down, not in the palace, but on the Gaut. The bearers were charged with a message to the effect that Bubboo Begum was not able to receive me, and the presents were therefore not required, but that I was being entertained in her house, and would presently be despatched in her own palanqueen to another Gaut, slightly higher up the river, whither the budgerow was to proceed in an hour's time to await me. It was as Gopalldass was in the act of casting off from his friend's Gaut in obedience to this command that he was found and stopped by Colonel Ahmuty's hircarra, and his course directed down the river instead of up, so that the further designs of the conspirators, whatever these may have been, were baulked. This portion of the affair I was able to discuss freely with Mr Maxwell when he sent the next morning to enquire if he might wait upon me to know how I found myself after the alarms to which I had been subjected, but the interview was only a short one, such was the embarrassment which beset us both at every turn in speculating upon the designs of the abductors and the events which had made their

attempt possible. Though Mr Maxwell was civil enough to accept without apparent surprise my presence and my solitary situation at Muxadavad, I was conscious of an extreme desire to justify both to him, but this I could not do without betraying Mrs Hastings. This sentiment was the less called-for that the young gentleman endeavoured, with the utmost kindness, to set me entirely at my ease, relating to me curious anecdotes of Mrs Ahmuty, who bears the unenviable reputation of the ugliest European female in India, and of her gallant spouse. Of Colonel Ahmuty it's told that on the occasion of some military manœuvres he refused in the most positive style to allow his command to break and disperse in accordance with the orders sent him. In face of the inextinguishable laughter of the other officers, and the serious displeasure of his General, who saw the entire effect of the field-day ruined, he adhered to his refusal with the utmost simplicity, asserting that Ahmuty's had never broke yet, and he could not conceive the Brigadier could be in earnest in requesting of him to teach 'em to do so. This revelation of the good gentleman's innocence only alarmed me the more, for how could I hope the need of silence as to my *adventure*, (for so it must appear to him,) would suggest itself to so open a character.

"Don't be afraid, ma'am," says Mr Maxwell, perceiving my uneasiness. "The Colonel respects Mr Hastings as much as any man living, and I gave him a genteel hint to hold his tongue."

"But 'twas not Mr Hastings sent me!" I cried, and could have bit off my tongue for the imprudence.

"I never thought it was, ma'am," says he drily.

"Oh, sir," I cried, "let me entreat you to frame no surmises on the subject, whatever may have occurred to you. Were I at liberty to unfold it, you'd be astonished by the nobility, the generosity, of the design, but my lips are sealed."

"Have I asked you to unseal them, ma'am?" he demanded, but with the greatest gentleness. "With some characters surmise is out of the question; the observer is conscious of certainty. But lest you should consider me possessed of a magnanimity to which I can lay no claim, I must confess a certain degree of secrecy on my own part. Will Mrs Ward be

so good as to believe, if she hear from any other quarter of a sudden resolution that must seem to savour of ingratitude in the man that's so infinitely indebted to her, that his silence is enforced only by the commands of the patron he is bound to revere?"

"Indeed, sir, I can claim no right to be acquainted with your secrets—" I began, and then felt ashamed of my coldness. "Oh, dear sir, pardon me. Whatever your design, I know you well enough to be assured of its conformity to the dictates of reason and virtue. When you're at liberty to accord me your confidence, I'll welcome it gladly; till then, I'll make no attempt to force it."

"Mrs Ward's words are like herself, and worthy of her alone," he replied, regarding me with an intensity that confused me.

"Do you expect no gratitude for your miraculous rescue of me, sir?" I asked, trying to cover my embarrassment.

"There was nothing of the miraculous in it, ma'am. I was but obeying my orders to return at the earliest possible moment when I was so happily enabled to do you a slight service."

"Sure you must estimate my worth very lightly, if the saving me from death or madness be a slight service!" I cried, with an air of levity, and felt reproved when he rose to depart.

"Since my life is at your disposal, ma'am, next to my country's, the greater the service you ask of me, the more you'll oblige me," he said, and returned to his own budgerow, leaving me consumed with shame, though why this should be I don't know, never having encouraged him to believe that I regarded him in any other light than that of a friend.

So great is the obstruction caused to travellers by the strong current of the river, that the voyage, which in ascending the stream had taken two days and night, occupied only part of one in the return. Leaving Muxadavad about midnight, we caught sight of Mr Motte's Gaut, from which I had embarked, just before sunset the next evening. A hircarra was stationed there, questionless to watch for my return, since when we reached the steps, Mrs Hastings was awaiting me with Mrs Motte, both of them not a little confounded to behold two budgerows instead of one, and Mr Maxwell handing me out.

"I had the good fortune to fall in with Mrs Ward in the course of her little jaunt up the river, ma'am," said the young gentleman to Mrs Hastings, "and she permitted me the felicity of attending her down. May I be favoured with any commands for Calcutta in continuing my voyage?"

Mrs Motte offering to fetch the letter she had seen Mrs Hastings writing to the Governor-General, we strolled towards the house, my patroness appearing as nearly at a loss as I have ever seen her, not knowing whether my mission was performed or not, nor how much Mr Maxwell had discovered. My desire was to relieve her anxiety at the earliest possible moment, as soon as we could genteelly get rid of Mr Maxwell, but the gentleman anticipated us both by entreating the favour of two or three minutes' attention from Mrs Hastings.

"And as Mrs Ward is suffering from the fatigues of the voyage," he added, "perhaps, ma'am, you'll dispense with her attendance for the moment."

"Hester, your presence an't desired," says my patroness, looking at me with a whimsical but slightly uneasy air. "Go and repose yourself, and I'll make you a visit shortly."

Thus dismissed, I had no choice but to retire, though equally uneasy with herself, and once in my own chamber, lost no time in making a change of dress, expecting Mrs Hastings immediately. She came not, however, and I waited, consumed with anxiety, until one of the black women brought me a message desiring my attendance in the Burree Beebee's apartment. The visage of my patroness was disturbed when I entered, and she received me with an extraordinary coldness, suffering me to stand unnoticed until I ventured to inquire whether she desired an account of my mission.

"Your relation would have been more welcome had it not first been confided to Mr Hastings' aid-du-camp," was the answer I received. I was overwhelmed, but summoned the courage to protest.

"Then have you confided it to him, ma'am? for I did not."

"How could he be acquainted with your errand, without you had betrayed it to him?"

"I don't know, indeed, ma'am. All I know is that no word

has passed my lips on the subject, nor did Mr Maxwell ask for one."

"Den you must have shown a monstrous clumsiness in permitting him to divine it!" she cried. "What foolishness have you committed?"

"That also I don't know, ma'am," I replied, scarce able to articulate. "As you have questionless heard from Mr Maxwell, he rescued me from a situation of the most frightful peril, and with an extreme delicacy forbore to ask how I became involved in it."

"What did dat matter when he guessed de whole truth? Bah! I might have known he had only guesssd it!" cried my patroness, with a prodigious disgust. "And with no more foundation than a guess he threatened me—me!"

"Oh, dearest madam, impossible!" I cried, overcome with horror.

"He threatened me with disclosing de whole affair to Mr Hastings—declared I had no right to employ you on such an errand. I have never been so addressed in all my life, never!"

"Would that I had disclosed the truth to him!" I cried, with tears. "Dear madam, permit me to disabuse his mind of these frightful misconceptions. He must be told that I went willingly, rejoicing in the opportunity of serving you, and—and——"

"And would do so again?" asked my patroness, with an ironical air. "No, my good Hessy, you are protected against such unjustifiable demands for de future. Your Maxwell extorted from me as de price of his silence dat I would never again employ you in dis manner."

"Oh, this is too much!" I cried. "By what right——"

"Pray ask dat of de gentleman himself. I was demolished, I assure you. He vowed Mr Hastings would know what was due to a gentlewoman of his family, if Mrs Hastings did not. I gave de required promise, and he was good enough to relieve me of his presence. I congratulate Mrs Ward on her champion!"

"Oh, ma'am, this cruel sarcasm! Have I deserved it?" I cried, falling on my knees in tears. "If this gentleman, in a mistaken chivalry, has behaved in so monstrous a style, can you

suspect me of prompting it? And if not, can you justly hold me guilty? Can years of devotion to your service lead merely to such an end? Do you indeed believe me the most ungrateful wretch that crawls on the face of the earth?"

"Never, my Hessy!" cried Mrs Hastings, with the most affecting tenderness. "Left to yourself, you are de being in whom I repose de most complete confidence. Why, den, lend yourself to de purposes of dis young man, who is not worthy of your esteem?"

"Ah, madam, at least he merits my gratitude! You won't deny this, when you have heard my history. If, after that, you still demand from me to refuse him my countenance in future, be assured I won't shrink from the sacrifice, however severe. My first duty is owed to you, my benefactress, my almost parent!"

"Dere's less than ten years between us, Hester, but I accept de maternal relation. Come, let us have dis history of yours."

I obeyed, relating the whole circumstances of my journey, and not, as may be imagined, diminishing the service—in itself impossible to exaggerate—which Mr Maxwell had rendered me, and in the end, as I had hoped, the brow of my patroness relaxed, and she allowed that the young gentleman had not done ill.

"For my Hester's sake," she said, "I will forgive him de rudeness shown to myself, and trust she'll induce a greater civility in him in future. And now to examine de presents of de Begum!"

HOOGLEY-HOUSE, *Oct. ye 9th.*

The evening before last, being Saturday, Mr Hastings arrived to spend Sunday, snatching a brief space from his labours in order to enjoy the solace of his lady's society. Mr Maxwell was not among his gentlemen on this occasion, for which I was not sorry, feeling at a loss how to meet him after his strange behaviour, and not guessing what news I was to hear respecting him. Indeed, my chief reason for vexation that evening was a piece of awkwardness of which I was guilty, and which threatened to betray my patroness's confidence. At supper Mr Hastings was very peremptory with us all to ask him at once whatever questions we desired on the posture of public affairs,

declaring that when the repast was over he would refuse to hear another word on the subject, since he was come here for the purpose of forgetting for one day the existence both of Calcutta and Madras. His first interrogator was Mr Motte, who, ever concerned for the liberties of the settlement, desired to know how the new accommodation with the Supreme Court was working. This instrument, which I should have mentioned in its place, was put out of my mind by the awful events following so closely upon it, for it was laid before Council on the 22nd of last month, on the evening of which day arrived the news of the Madras disasters. The truce concluded at the beginning of the hot weather between the Government and the Court was understood to be based upon an undertaking of the former to examine into the legal affairs of the Presidency, in the hope that these might be put upon a more equitable footing. One of the principal causes of confusion has been the state of the civil courts of the province, which were in the hands, not of the legal gentlemen, but of the Company's district officers, and from which an appeal has hitherto lain, not to the Supreme Court, but to the Governor-General in Council. This separate jurisdiction has always acted as a most powerful irritant on the minds of the Judges, who have lost no opportunity of blaming and questioning its results—opportunities rendered, alas! far too frequent by the ignorance or the corruption of the gentlemen unversed in legal methods who held authority in these courts. Mr Hastings' first endeavour was the reform of these abuses by removing this authority from the hands of the provincial officers generally to those of one among them, independent of the rest, and this change has been in force for near six months. But the result was disastrous, in that to the old conflict of the two jurisdictions was now added a perpetual contest between the officers chosen as civil judges and the general body of those they superseded, so that the entire time of the Governor-General and Council bade fair to be occupied with questions of this nature, for settling which they possessed neither the training nor the leisure. When this was become evident to all, Mr Hastings brought in his final proposal, which included the transference of the powers of this civil court of appeal, the *Sudder Dewanny Adawlut*, as it is

called in Moors, from the Council to a judge to be specially appointed at a genteel salary, and dependent upon the pleasure of the Governor-General in Council for his place—the first occupant of this new post to be the Chief-Justice, Sir Elijah Impey. Although this accommodation provided both for a reform of abuses, the cessation of the perpetual combats as to jurisdiction, and the supremacy of the Government over the Supreme Court, —all of them objects of the utmost moment,—it was fiercely opposed in Council by Mr Francis under the name of a *job*. It was in vain Mr Hastings pointed out that by its means the problem which had baffled all attempts at solution, and threatened to lead to a civil war, was solved in a style satisfactory to all parties. Mr Francis dragged Mr Wheler with him—though this exercise of his influence has proved almost his last—and the change was effected only by the Governor-General's casting vote, supported by that of Sir Eyre Coote. On Mr Motte's inquiring whether the result had answered his expectations, Mr Hastings expressed himself as fully satisfied with it.

"The Chief-Justice has the best heart in the world, when he an't drawn aside by the violence of his colleagues," he said, "and now that it's so clearly to his interest to moderate their transports, there's no doubt but he'll do it, while they are provided with a salvo to their consciences in the shape of the increased consideration attaching to their body. As for Francis, he may go about like the villain in the play muttering, 'A day will come,' but he can't do much in face of the peace and contentment of the whole Presidency. Sir Elijah is already drawing up a code of brief practical rules for the information of the district judges, and when an opportunity offers, he'll make a series of visits to 'em in turn, and after observing their methods, commend or reprobate them, as the case may be."

"Sure, dear sir," says Mrs Motte, "you must design by these words to make my spouse feel he was too hasty in the matter of those petitions he drew up. 'Twill be a thousand pities if we bring upon us a new Regulating Act, when you had so excellent a remedy all the while in your mind."

"Why, ma'am, I was equally guilty with Mr Motte, at least

towards the end of the affair, in the matter of the petitions. And as for the plan, must I confess it had no place in my mind before last cold weather, when our dissensions reached their worst pitch? Sir Elijah's resolute hostility, which cut me to the heart, must have the credit of making me look about for the means to end it."

"May you be as successful in your military as your legal operations, sir!" said the lady, with that graceful air she has to perfection. "I trust all goes according to your mind thus far?"

"Well, ma'am, the General is in a monstrous good temper in the prospect of active service; the masters of the Indiamen impressed to convey the force are pacified, and promise to weigh anchor at the end of the week; and every officer in the Presidency—or so it appears to me—has signified his desire to make a part of the expedition."

"Nobody questions either the spirit of the troops or the capacity of their commander, sir," said Mr Motte. "What is likely to run short is the cash, if you'll excuse plain speaking. How go the loans, if I may ask?"

"Why, reasonable well. Indeed, the wealthy Gentoos are coming forward pretty heartily, and there's others nibbling at the bait. What do you say to Munny Begum's dewan making a vast pother about lending some inconsiderable sum—half a lack or so?"

"Why, sir, that I hope it won't come to Mr Francis' ears, or his worst suspicions will be confirmed."

"You don't know, ma'am," says Mr Hastings, addressing himself to me, I suppose because he perceived my interest in the subject, "that Mr Francis is pleased to attribute my support of Munny Begum to the dangerous charms of the lady—the dancing-girl, as he styles her, forgetting the respectable situation to which she has so long been elevated?"

"Indeed, sir," I cried with great indignation, "one glance at the lady would give Mr Francis' assertion the lie."

"Why, you speak as though you had her acquaintance!" says Mr Hastings, and I saw his lady frown. "Never having enjoyed that privilege, I am no judge. But Mrs Ward and I shall

quarrel, if she prefer to allege in my defence the absence of temptation rather than my own integrity."

I was well content to let the matter end in the laugh that followed, looking forward with some apprehension to meeting my patroness afterwards. She appeared, however, to have forgot my slip, though had she designed to punish me, she possessed the means ready to her hand.

"Pray, Mrs Ward," she said, when I waited on her in her apartment, "did your Maxwell acquaint you of dis flagrant piece of ingratitude he was meditating against Mr Hastings?"

"Ingratitude, ma'am? Mr Maxwell?" I stammered. "Sure he holds Mr Hastings in the most extreme veneration."

"And yet he tells him dat making translates of Persian letters is no employment for a young fellow of spirit, and he'll thank him to let him return to his profession, and make a part of de Carnatic expedition under his old commander, Colonel Pearse."

Here was a small particle of consolation for me, since this expedition, which is to proceed by land, can't possibly effect a start for a month or so; but the intelligence itself was staggering.

"Was Mr Hastings much displeased, ma'am?" I ventured to enquire.

"Why, you know de benevolence of Mr Hastings, dat only de vilest and most inveterate treachery will make him cast off a person to whom he has once given his countenance. Such was his concern for de reputation of de unhappy young man, dat he interested himself to have him appointed Persian interpreter to Sir Eyre Coote, to spare him de appearance of returning in disgrace."

"But—but—sure Sir Eyre Coote embarks this week, ma'am!"

"True, and his family with him. Is your concern den so great for dis Maxwell, in whom you refused to interest yourself when I desired it?"

"He—I—we are no more than friends, ma'am."

"So it appears, if de fellow neglected to acquaint you of his design. But since he is so ill advised, I rejoice your heart an't engaged. Come, my Hessy, he an't worthy of dis pique—forget him!"

What could I say? I said nothing, even as I can write nothing here. Was it not best that my patroness should attribute to resentment at Maxwell's silence the disturbance I could not conceal?

HOOGLEY-HOUSE, *Oct. ye 16th.*

Sir Eyre Coote and his force embarked on Saturday with great cheerfulness on board of the *Duke of Kingston* and the other vessels prepared for them, and dropped down the river immediately. Maxwell is departed, and without our exchanging a single word in confidence. The blame for this is mine. He arrived here on Wednesday to pay his respects to Mrs Hastings, and I read in his speaking eyes that he desired to bid farewell also to me. But I can't say how it happened; we found no opportunity. The Governor-General being absent, I remained in attendance on Mrs Hastings, and without the slightest design, as I am convinced, she kept me busy the entire evening. He could not request a private interview, I—must I say it?—would not. I told myself that if he desired it he might ask for it, forgetting that the friendly relation I have so sedulously maintained between us left him no ground for it. Yet he would have taken the step had I given him so much as a glance of encouragement, but this I was resolute to withhold. What madness is it that thus induces us to actions, the recollection of which causes the severest pangs of remorse? It seems now incredible that I could coldly have rebuffed the eagerness apparent in his every feature, when an eagerness at least as great was concealed under my own more sedate appearance; but I did. Was it that I could not face the amusement, the raillery of my patroness and Mrs Motte? I feel now that Mrs Hastings' most poignant displeasure would be nothing to the pain I endure, and her raillery rather agreeable than otherwise. Or was it that I feared to display the eagerness of which I have spoken, chusing rather to see Maxwell depart in the belief that I was cold than admit that my sentiments responded to his own? This it may have been, or both of these, which despatched him to encounter all the hazards of war without one assurance of my true feelings, and leaves me conscious that the gentle reproof

I received this morning from Mr Hastings, before his return to Calcutta, ought to have been a thousand times more severe.

"Pray, Mrs Ward, what did you say to my poor Maxwell to send him on board the *Kingston* with so doleful a visage?" he asked me.

"I—I said nothing, sir," I murmured, horribly confused.

"Then he's more of a fool than I had thought him, when I made an errand for him to this place on purpose."

"There was no opportunity, sir," I faultered.

"Then I'll be shot if the fault was his! Why did you refuse him the opportunity, ma'am? You know the poor man's mind well enough."

"I—I can't say, sir."

"'Twas pique, I'll swear it! You thought he ought to have acquainted you earlier of his design? But that was my doing. I insisted on his considering the matter on his journey to Berhampore, and saying nothing until he returned. He knows I can't serve him as I should wish in the military line, where the General takes very ill any interference with his appointments, and I desired him to understand what he was doing. He should have consulted your wishes, you think?"

"Oh no, sir. What reason was there——"

"Pho, ma'am! why wear the mask with me, who am trying to serve you?"

"Indeed, dear sir, I might have guessed what you say, from Mr Maxwell's own assurance. 'Twas not pique—'twas a sort of —oh, I can't tell you what it was. But I suffered him to depart without a word."

"Punctilio, ma'am! Mrs Ward prefers to maintain her punctilio rather than afford a crumb of comfort to the man that has erected her to the highest place in his esteem. I can only trust that the reflection is a soothing one?"

"Oh, sir, you are cruel!" I cried, and weeping, effected my escape.

HOOGLEY-HOUSE, *Oct. ye* 21*st.*

Late last night Mr Hastings arrived from Calcutta, having, as he phrased it, led a migratory existence since his last visit. Reaching town on Monday night, he presided on Tuesday in the

Council, and then dropped down the river in his budgerow as far as Culpee, where the *Kingston* and all the other ships are lying, with the expedition on board, unable to get out of the river. Having made Sir Eyre Coote a visit, and honoured the force with an inspection of their ship-quarters, he returned to Calcutta, and after the meeting of Council yesterday morning, proceeded hither, riding in his chariot as far as Barnagur, carrying with him Sir John Day, and there finding his pinnace, which brought him to a point on the river-bank where the carriage and horses, sent by Mrs Hastings from this place, were awaiting him. The extreme force of the current, due to the rains, is now considerably abated, so that the gentlemen were in time for a late supper, instead of finding all the household fast asleep, as Mr Hastings had feared. The Governor-General was in his most sprightly humour, enlarging on the horrible appearance of an alligator he had encountered on his voyage down the river, and swearing that he would never again allow Mrs Hastings the pleasure of a sojourn at Beercool, since he understood these creatures were common even nearer to the sea. I could not bring myself to ask a question on the only topic that interested me, and Mrs Hastings is still too much displeased with Maxwell to make any enquiry about him; but at length Mrs Motte, I think out of compassion for me, asked whether Mr Hastings had seen his quondam aid-du-camp, and how he did. But the answer was not such as to afford me any comfort, Mr Hastings declaring that he never saw a man so eager to be away, and ready to curse the wind, the tides, the heavy lading of the ship, and everything else that delayed his departure.

But as though to prove his consideration for me in spite of this apparent callousness, Mr Hastings demanded my help to-day in copying a great number of papers, proceedings of Council, correspondence with the Berar Government, and the like, which he is sending home to his friend Mr Sulivan, one of the Directors, by the *Tryall* pacquet. Divining that this occupation would assist in restoring my mind to its usual tranquillity, he has promised me as much more of it as I chuse, and did me the further kindness to induce Mrs Hastings to release me from attending her to-night to the assembly at the Portugueze

Governor's, knowing that the gaiety there would be little congenial with my feelings. He secured my absence on the plea that my services were needed in copying the documents, but I have now finished them, and am filling up my time, listlessly enough, with writing this, in the interval of waiting for the return of my patroness. The pavilion——

Oct. ye 23rd.

I had wrote thus far, when a commotion at the gate, as of somebody arriving, startled me; but reflecting that it could hardly be any one of more importance than a *sundookwaller*[1]—these men besetting Mr Motte at all hours with rarities for sale—I composed myself again. But hearing on the path leading to the house the steps of a person wearing boots, and therefore a European, I knew that this must signify the arrival of despatches, all the Europeans in Hoogley, and many from the neighbouring settlements, being assembled at the Governor's, and I advanced accordingly to the doorway of the pavilion where I was writing. One of the servants met me there.

"Macsool Saub hye, Beebee," says he.

"Maxwell Saub!" I cried. "Impossible! Not Lieutenant Maxwell?"

"Loftunun Macsool Saub," the fellow repeated, and at the words Mr Maxwell came out of the darkness into the light cast by my lamp, and bowed with a coldness which wounded me more cruelly than the most poignant reproaches.

"I must apologize for disturbing Mrs Ward," he said. "Had I known who was the occupant of the pavilion, I had never intruded upon her retirement."

Strange as it appears, I was forced to strive with all my might to conquer the desire that seized me to meet his coldness with an equal coldness of my own. I waved the servant away, and standing upon the steps of the pavilion, "*Oh, Maxwell,*" I cried, "*forgive!*"

Delight and incredulity strove together in his visage, but he sprang up the steps to my side. Then, "Ma'am," he said, with

[1] Equivalent to the modern *beparallah.*

an encreased kindness but still a proportion of doubt, "that's not a word to be uttered by you to me."

"There's no other," I cried. "Yes, Maxwell, you must forgive my persistent coldness, my cruelty t'other day. I merited your unkindness just now, but believe me, your judgment of my conduct can't be more severe than my own."

"Alas, madam!" he stammered, "this condescending acknowledgment—this angelic frankness—how can I repay it? I had gone away resolved to—to—how shall I say it?"

"To forget the ungrateful creature on whom you had conferred your devotion," said I. "And had you succeeded, sir?"

"Well, no, ma'am; I must confess I had made extraordinary little way in the attempt."

"'Twill be all the easier, then, to try to remember her now."

"To try, ma'am? No, indeed; your image has been with me night and day, driving me almost to desperation because I could neither engage in active pursuits and so dissipate it, nor forget the chilling coldness which had marred its mild benevolence. Dearest madam, am I truly to be blest? Is the happiness I have so long sought to crown this undeserving head? Am I indeed to cherish the hope of one day calling you mine?"

I could not answer him, but held out my hand, which he kissed with all the fervour imaginable. Then leading me to a seat, he placed himself beside me, and still retaining my hand, burst into a warm panegyric which I can't repeat, extolling in turn my countenance, my understanding and my heart, and depreciating himself in the most generous style.

"Hold, sir!" I cried at last. "Unless you wish me to enter on a contest of civility with you, to what purpose are these polite remarks of yours? I confer my favour—so you are good enough to put it—on a gentleman whom I believe worthy of my esteem, and you do your best to persuade me my confidence is misplaced. I forbid you to malign my choice any further."

"Oh, ma'am, will you allow nothing for the rapture of a man who sees suddenly within his reach the prize he has for years desired in vain, and at last beheld, as he believed, absolutely removed from him? Can a few brief moments have effected

this blessed change? I tremble to think of my condition if duty had not brought me hither this evening."

"But how is it you are able to come?" I asked him. "Sure the ships may sail at any moment."

"Not while this wind lasts, ma'am. Captain Nutt of the *Kingston* assured me they might still be detained a week. And being honoured by the General with conveying this despatch——"

"Was it a welcome honour, sir?"

"Why no, my dearest life, I must confess I had been glad to devolve it on somebody else. But Mr Hastings had particularly desired that I should be the bearer——"

"Ah!" I cried, "then it's to Mr Hastings you owe your present happiness, sir, such as it is. He must have designed this return of yours even when he was reproving me for my usage of you."

"I owe everything to Mr Hastings," he replied, with an extraordinary fervour; "but this is the greatest benefit of all, and conferred at a time when most men would have cast me off as ungrateful."

"Tell me, Maxwell; how could you bring yourself to forsake him?"

"I could not have done it, had not he himself discerned my dejection as I assisted to write answers to all the officers who desired to be sent on active service. He questioned me with his usual mildness, and received my confession of the intolerable pain it caused me to sit day after day over papers like any cranny,[1] while my sword rusted in the scabbard, and my comrades were all to enjoy the happiness of fighting for their country. Does my Mrs Ward accuse me of fickleness? I believe I was born for a soldier, not a clerk, though gratitude for her kindness and Mr Hastings' patronage has kept me these two years at the desk. I han't forgot, if she has, that I signalised my first conversation with her by desiring to be at the wars instead of in her company."

"At least I might have been acquainted of your resolution by your own lips," I said.

"And I desired to do it, but Mr Hastings recommended silence

[1] *Krani*, scribe, name given to the writers or junior civil servants.

while I gave the matter full consideration. My loss of service, the General's jealousy of interference, even his dislike of officers who owe their situation to anybody's patronage but his own,—these would prejudice me in returning to the army, and he desired me to weigh them well on my journey to Berhampore. I complied, and returned in the same mind. Would she I adore have desired me to change it?"

"She would have you act according to your conscience, 'sir. Had she detained you here, she would have reproached herself with turning Calcutta into a Capua. She bids you go."

"That's my own noble girl!" said Maxwell, with prodigious warmth, and before I was aware, he had gone so far as to salute my cheek. For this freedom I rebuked him, and he asked my forgiveness very humbly, so that I was compelled to pardon him, when we amused ourselves with depicting the future, when, Colonel Pearse being promoted general and made Commander-in-Chief, Maxwell, returning with him covered with glory, might succeed him as Commander of the Artillery, when we would inhabit one of the fine houses built for the officers in Fort William, which have an air of neatness and elegance that charms me particularly.

"But if I return like poor Mr Fraser, short of a leg and an arm?" he asked me.

"Why, then I'll endeavour to resemble my behaviour to Mrs Fraser's, who only affects her spouse the more for every misfortune he suffers," said I.

"And if I don't return for years, and then as poor and undistinguished as at this moment?"

"If Omnipotence preserve me, you'll find me awaiting you still," I assured him, and he raised my hand again to his lips in silence.

What a mournful pleasure do I now discover in tracing afresh every word and incident of that evening! as though I could transfer to the cold and voiceless paper the clasp of my Maxwell's fingers, the music of his tones! Beloved youth, how noble is thy spirit, which with uncomplaining fortitude endured a separation such as it almost drew thy tears only to contemplate!

How long we sat hand in hand, in a sympathetic and not unhappy silence, I don't know, but we were disturbed by the blaze of lights and the noise of the servants which announced the return of our patrons and their hosts. Something to my confusion, Mr Hastings, having questionless heard of the arrival from the porter, came at once to the pavilion, handing his lady, but Maxwell displayed no hesitation.

"Dear sir, my honoured patron," he said, leading me out to meet them, "and you, madam, allow me to present to you the lady who has promised to make me the happiest of men."

I thought Mrs Hastings betrayed less pleasure than her spouse, but she offered the usual civil congratulations, and only then remembered to ask how Maxwell had contrived to be here.

"That," says Mr Hastings, with an air of pride, "is my doing, and I flatter myself that I have but succeeded in anticipating the wishes of my Marian's benevolent heart. Knowing how it would rejoice her to behold the happiness of two virtuous and deserving young persons, I took the liberty of forestalling her intentions, and am able to present them to her in the way of accomplishment."

Thus does this truly excellent man compel virtue, as it were, in others, by supposing in them an incapacity for the opposite. The kindness which irradiated his visage found an instant reflection in that of his lady, who embraced me with all her ancient affability.

"I can quarrel with nothing dat's for my Hester's happiness," she said, "and I grudge Mr Maxwell his good fortune de less dat it must be so long before he can take her from me."

CHAPTER XX.

A JOURNEY.

BELVIDERE-HOUSE, *May ye 21st*, 1781.

It appears impossible that seven months should be elapsed since Maxwell departed, to fight, as he said, the more vigorously in honour of her who had so infinitely honoured him, without my writing one word in these memoirs; but Mrs Hastings calling upon me to-day for the exact date of Mr Wheler's marriage with Miss Durnford, I was compelled to confess that I could not oblige her. By consulting a letter of Mr Hastings' which she had by her, she discovered it to be the 16th of December, but I suffered not a little raillery on the score of writing so long letters to Maxwell that I had no time for more. Mr Hastings also demanding very seriously what was become of the disinterested annalist to whom he looked to record the events of his period of office, I was ashamed of my idleness, and determined to repair it as far as possible. Yet I can't accept all the blame, since the week after Maxwell's departure, all the despatches Mr Hastings had prepared for the *Tryall* being lost in a storm, he set all his family to work to copy them afresh, and in this work I was occupied almost incessantly for some time. The preoccupation was the more welcome that on October 23rd, the day before the storm, the fleet, which Maxwell had but just reached in time, succeeded in quitting the river, so that I was under the most painful apprehensions for his safety until at the end of November we received from Madras the news of Sir Eyre Coote's arrival there on the 5th of that month, fifty-two days only since the return of Sir Hector Munro to the Mount after his disgraceful retreat. Such is the illiberal animosity still displayed by the party of Mr Francis, that a week after the vessels were got safe to sea, 'The Bengal Gazette' cheered the town with the rumour that they were still lying at Culpee, the troops very sickly, and the *Kingston*, with the General and the fifteen lacks of rupees on board, gone aground because too deeply laden!

It must be wished by all friends of the Government that the lie might have been given the more completely to these ungenerous aspersions by the immediate and signal success of Sir Eyre Coote's operations, but very little is as yet achieved in the Carnatic, with the exception of the relief of Wandiwash, a fortress defended against Hyder with the most extraordinary prudence and gallantry by Lieutenant Flint, a young officer of extreme promise. Such is the despondent condition of the Madras troops, so absolute the lack of transport and supplies for the army, that the General finds himself almost incapable of moving. The French fleet, so long dreaded, is arrived on the coast, and besides proving the most profitable of allies to Hyder, has the river here practically closed to British vessels, and the Governor-General, with the late heavy drains on the treasury entirely unsupplied, has to face the additional task of providing and conveying safe to the Carnatic a monthly sum of seven lacks and a half. It may savour somewhat of a revengeful spirit, but I am heartily glad to say it, that five days after the General's arrival, Mr Whitehill, one of the foremost promoters of the Madras disasters, was suspended from his seat as President of that Committee, by order of the Supreme Government, for the persistent disobedience which had contributed to bring about Hyder's invasion.

The projected treaty of peace and alliance with the Marattas has so far met with no better success than the Carnatic operations. The instrument, fully drawn out and signed on our part, was forwarded to Naugpoor, with the request that Moodajee Bounceloe, whose recent letters, even since the intelligence of Hyder's victories, had been couched in the most liberal and gratifying style, should act as mediator in introducing it to the Poonah Government and recommending their acceptance of it. Counsels more prudent or more cowardly had, however, prevailed in the interval at the Berar court, and an absolute refusal to mediate was returned, showing that to these Indians our affairs appeared desperate. But even a blow of this magnitude had no effect to disturb the equanimity of Mr Hastings. Immediately on the receipt of the news he issued orders for the instant march of the detachment already assembled at Midna-

pore under Colonel Pearse, in the firm belief that there's nothing better calculated to restore confidence in our fortunes than the exhibition of a determined spirit. The Colonel's orders were to prosecute his march in defiance of all opposition, but to do his utmost to avoid a rupture with the Berar troops occupying the country through which he was to pass, while at the same time Mr Anderson was despatched to their commander, Chimnajee Bounceloe, to acquaint him of the fact. The result has been such as to justify Mr Hastings' boldness, and signally to discredit the prophecies of the Franciscan party, who spread the wildest rumours of a Berar invasion, alleging that the Bounceloe's plunderers were arrived within eight coss of Midnapore—a wicked fabrication which so terrified a very worthy female of an advanced age, who had witnessed the capture of Calcutta by the Nabob of Bengal in 1756, that she actually died from fright. The anticipated invasion not occurring, the Franciscans, in the most convenient manner, forgot all their predictions, and with the utmost frenzy denounced the Governor-General for prostituting the honour of Britain by lavishing treasure to buy off the Berar Marattas. The transaction thus reprobated was the conclusion of a treaty with Moodajee which bound that prince permanently to our interests, inducing him even to supply a detachment of two thousand horse to accompany Colonel Pearse's force, on consideration of receiving the remainder of the sum offered him in last year's negociations. Mr Hastings, who had already advanced him three lacks, these obtained from Raja Nobkissen, now provides three lacks more, which were offered to him as a personal present by Kelleram Bawboo, the dewan of Bahar, for a fine on renewing his office of farmer-general of the taxes, and the remaining ten lacks were lent by [1] this Government.

Thus not only is Bengal relieved from a perpetual menace, but the most formidable member of the Nizam's confederacy, next to Hyder, is detached from that side to our own, and by the same means a much needed accession of strength is supplied to Colonel Pearse. This excellent officer has carried out his orders with the greatest resolution, in spite of every variety of adverse circumstance, such as the dishonest behaviour of

[1] Apparently borrowed under a Government guarantee.

certain of his officers, who endeavoured to defraud the Seapoys of their pay by means of false returns, the large number of desertions from his force, and lastly, at Gunjam, by the attacks of a most frightful contagious disorder called the *Mordecheen*.[1] This disease, which appears to be a species of the plague, threatened to annihilate the entire detachment, carrying off near a thousand men, and has since reached Calcutta, some fifteen hundred of the black population being estimated to have died of it. Some of the physical tribe ascribe it to the exhalations arising from the rains, which have fallen incessantly, and with great violence, during the last two months, others to the drinking brackish water, but all agree that this fearful mortality is due in part to the excessive swiftness of the distemper, death frequently ensuing after an hour's illness, and in part to the impossibility, whether owing to poverty or to their religion, of either Moors' or Gentoos' adopting the only remedies known, which are ardent spirits or hot wine with spices.

Mr Hastings having failed in his design to unite the entire Maratta power with us against Hyder, determined, as his next best course, to press the war with the utmost resolution, and having despatched reinforcements to General Goddard, that brave and enterprising officer rejoiced him in December with the capture of the strong fortress of Basine. The news reached Calcutta before the end of January, and was considered of sufficient moment to merit a salute, so great is the importance attached to this town both by the Marattas and ourselves. Next he reduced the fort of Arnall, and the latest advices display him as pushing on to dictate terms at Poonah itself, while the entire Maratta army was assembling to attack him. A decisive success at this point could not but have the happiest effect; but there's cause for grave apprehension in the letters from the Bombay committee, who, without any pretence of consulting the brave Goddard, announce that they are resolved to confine the war to the defence of their new acquisitions, and are sending home the reinforcements despatched to them last year from Madras. Not yet is the Governor-General to be

[1] The first cholera epidemic on record. In Forbes's account of the siege of Onore, the disease is called *mort-de-chien*.

released from the wanton and mischievous interference of his subordinates!

Another source of disappointment is the timid and vacillating behaviour of Colonel Camac, on whose capacity Mr Hastings, as one may say, staked his very existence last summer. This gentleman, marching into Malva with great resolution, captured the fort of Sipparee without resistance, but when Scindia appeared with his army suffered himself to be enclosed, and even cannonaded, by them in the open town of Sironge. Compelled to quit this place from want of food, he was strongly recommended by Captain Bruce, the hero of Guallier, to advance to Bopaul, the chief of which town is in our interest, but he preferred the advice of the rest of his officers, who recommended a retreat. By this measure his perils were infinitely multiplied without a single compensation, for the exulting Scindia hung upon his rear, plundering his baggage and camp-followers. At length the intrepid Bruce was granted a hearing, and after many misgivings, his irresolute commander determined to turn upon the pursuers, an act of boldness which met with the most signal success, resulting in the capture of the greater part of Scindia's baggage and provision-train, the whole of his artillery and ammunition, including a howitz taken from us at Worgaum, and his own standard-elephant. Before he could spoil the effect of this victory by any fresh display whether of pusillanimity or foolishness, Colonel Camac was to be joined with a large reinforcement by Colonel Muir, for whose help he had frantically appealed, and who will take over the command, as the senior officer. In spite of the ineptitude with which it has been conducted, this movement of Colonel Camac's has produced the effect designed by Mr Hastings, to separate Scindia from the general Maratta army by anxiety for his hereditary dominions, and to keep him occupied in Malva instead of adding his forces to those pressing upon General Goddard.

One singular consolation has been permitted to Mr Hastings during this cold season, so disappointing in its foreign affairs—the departure of Mr Francis, who quitted Calcutta on board the *Fox* the 3rd of December last, in a condition of despondency that would have moved my pity in any other person. But his

firm conviction that nothing but desolation and ruin to the settlement could follow his exit, though coupled with the admission that he had effected little or nothing of all that he had planned, was made so indecently public that there's no room for any other sentiment than indignation. For an unsuccessful statesman retiring in broken health from the scene of his unprofitable labours one might spare a pitying thought, but hardly to one who departs with a mouth filled with the most violent menaces, and a purse well supplied with funds obtained at the gaming-table. The unhappy woman who owed to Mr Francis the loss of her husband's confidence and of the regard of the virtuous, quitted Calcutta a short time before him in a Dutch vessel, but with the intention, I rejoice to say, of placing herself under the reputable protection of relatives in France, who, it's to be hoped, will assist her in regaining that general esteem which a fatal vanity and too easy softness have caused her to forfeit.

The extreme bitterness of the language employed by Mr Francis against the Governor-General, not only in the minutes which he circulated almost to the instant of his departure, but in general correspondence and conversation, suggested to the friends of Mr Hastings the expediency of finding some means to counteract the effect such a torrent of vituperation, however ill founded, might produce upon public opinion at home. The most solicitous of these friends was Captain John Scott, who, as one of Mr Hastings' aids-du-camp, took an active part in arranging, with Mr Ducarel on behalf of Mr Francis, the preliminaries of that accommodation which subsisted for so short a period, but had since proceeded to Chunar in command of a battalion. This gentleman, the most sprightly and officious person in the world, found himself very ill suited with a post involving garrison duty alone, and no prospect of going on service, and cast about for some more congenial scene. Hearing of Mr Francis' intended return home, and having acquired a moderate fortune, he wrote forthwith to Mr Hastings, offering to resign the army and proceed to England as his accredited agent and representative, prepared to meet Mr Francis' calumnies with a truthful statement of the actual facts, and to advance his patron's interests with all the assiduity in his power. Convinced of the Captain's attach-

ment to his person, and confiding in his discretion, though a little doubtful of his extreme restlessness and anxiety to be always moving, Mr Hastings accepted of his offer, and early in January Mr Scott, (promoted Major on proceeding home with despatches,) quitted Bengal in a Portugueze vessel, accompanied by his lady and their lovely little daughter, Lizzy.

Having already deprived himself of Maxwell's services, Mr Hastings lost another member of his family in January, when Mr Markham was despatched to Bennaris to assume the responsible post of Resident, in succession to Mr Fowke, a creature of Mr Francis', to whom the Governor-General could accord no confidence. This appointment was made with the full concurrence and approval of Mr Wheler, who felt himself highly complimented by such an advancement for a person adopted from his own family and patronage, and the young gentleman, (who has but just completed his twenty-first year,) departed with the good wishes of all. This complacency of Mr Hastings towards Mr Wheler is of a piece with all his conduct, for the *Silent Member*, (as he is styled by 'The Bengal Gazette,') enjoys the first option in most appointments that fall vacant, and has thus been enabled to provide handsomely for all his friends, in accordance with the Governor-General's invariable preference for the exercise, rather than the emoluments, of power. In return, Mr Wheler accords his support to the Governor-General's measures—as he has been informed from home is the desire of Administration—and remains on the most cordial terms with him. This cordiality is only disturbed by the efforts of the Franciscan party to practise on the pliancy of Mr Wheler's disposition, and erect him into a head-piece for their intrigues. Coming to him with tales and rumours of a disturbing nature, these plotters do their utmost to persuade the poor gentleman to set himself in opposition to Mr Hastings, and even to return to the example set by Mr Francis. Of late Mess. Livius, Shee and Ducarell, with other adherents of Mr Francis, have made a vigorous effort against Mr Hastings, drawing into their number Colonel Watson and others, and holding regular meetings, after the manner of those "associations"[1]

[1] Political organisations answering, apparently, to the French revolutionary clubs.

now fashionable at home, chiefly at the house of Mr Fay, the spouse of the unfortunate lady who was once Hyder's captive. This gentleman, after being patronised by the Chief-Justice, has turned against him, and vies with Colonel Watson in his violent hatred—an ingratitude which appears to have led to the failure of the conspiracy. Having drawn up a scheme for the recall of Colonels Camac and Pearse, and the conclusion of peace with the Marattas on terms to be prescribed by that nation, the Franciscans presented it to Mr Wheler as the sole policy to save the state from certain ruin, and from him, with a singular fatuity, proceeded to Sir Elijah Impey, who, mistrusting this sudden deference, laid the matter promptly before Mr Hastings. Whether in alarm or in pique, Colonel Watson did the same very shortly after, and the affair being thus *blown*, the Governor-General preferred to treat it as a matter for laughter rather than severity. Disregarding Sir Elijah's advice to punish the plotters, he reproved them with a good-humoured ridicule which must have been more galling than the most violent anger, and accepted the abject apologies they were eager to offer. But when such creatures as these think fit to conspire for the possession of power, in what a situation of uneasiness would the state be, under a less resolute head! One enemy Mr Hastings, to his lasting honour, has turned into a friend, and this is Mr Shore, the most respectable of Mr Francis' adherents, and a person of prudence and virtue. This young gentleman shared in the hatred felt by his party for the Governor-General only through ignorance, and on being summoned to Calcutta to take a part in the work of the new Revenue Board, which Mr Hastings has lately reformed, he obeyed with the most intense reluctance, but after less than six weeks' intercourse with his new patron, laid aside in the handsomest style his resentment, and declared himself Mr Hastings' supporter for ever.

Returning to more intimate themes, the absence from Calcutta which brought about such momentous changes in my private history lasted until Christmas Eve, when Mr Hastings came to Hoogley to fetch his lady, and welcomed her return with the most affecting tenderness. During the days immediately succeeding her arrival, he was perpetually seeking her apartments

on the most trifling pretexts, "to assure himself," as he said, "of his happiness in having his Marian actually restored to him"; and his evident delight in her return drew forth the usual crop of ill-natured remarks from the Franciscans and their mouthpiece 'The Bengal Gazette.' This scurrilous journal has now a fresh reason for hostility to Mr Hastings, since a paragraph of singular venom, taking a gross liberty with the name of Mrs Hastings and her influence over her spouse, was promptly resented by the Governor-General, who issued a prohibition excluding the paper from passing though the post. This measure, which might have pressed hardly on the community, is alleviated by the fact that we have now a second weekly newspaper, 'The India Gazette,' composed in a style equally sprightly with Mr Hickey's journal, but far more liberal, and avoiding those improper personalities which are calculated only to call the blush to the cheek of innocence. Since this prohibition, Mr Hickey has signalised himself by a profusion of language of a more than commonly indecent vigour, attacking and bespattering with contumely every the most honoured name in the settlement, in the hope, so say the gentlemen, of finding his paper suppressed as a public nuisance, and himself provided with the opportunity to personate a martyr.

The ordinary entertainments of the cold season took place on a scale of more than usual splendour, at the particular desire of the Governor-General, who, pursuing his principle that our empire in India stands or falls upon opinion, considered that nothing would be better calculated to assure the minds of the Indians than to observe that we could still engage in genuine gaiety, undisturbed by our disasters. Of this gaiety he himself presented the most benignant example conceivable, comparing himself on the occasion of the New Year's Day festivities to Mars armed by the Graces, since Mrs Hastings had provided from her stores the white fur to decorate his dressed suit, Mrs Motte had embroidered him a waistcoat in the most delicate style, and I had worked his ruffles. The day was marked as usual by the firing of salutes from the battery at Loll Diggy, the gentlemen's breakfast, the dinner and ball to the ladies, a band of music and illuminations; and it was followed by excursions to

Sooksaugur and Beercool, races, and sylvan entertainments in the grounds of various of the chief persons of the settlement. The Harmonic came to a final end with the month of January, having been universally voted a *bore* by our gay young fellows, and even its house is to be made the subject of a lottery among the subscribers; but it is replaced by select parties, many of them set on foot by a *click*[1] or assemblage of young gentlemen styling themselves The Community, associated together for the practice of cottillions and other elegant amusements, and for correcting the manners of our society.

Thus, while the sea is closed by the French cruisers, and French and Portuguese spies are perpetually being discovered, or at least suspected, and fresh recruits are found with difficulty for the army, Calcutta dances its minuets and figure-dances, or its cottillions, according to the gravity of the occasion; takes the dust—so say our cynics—at the winning-post on the race-course to watch its finest young ladies, in hats and feathers towering to the sky, driving their admirers in phaëtons and four, and upsetting the buggys of such quiet persons as presume to dispute the ground with them; while in the person of its matrons it spends thousands of rupees in a single morning among the Europe shops or at the sale of a China cargo. And among the observers—and to some extent the participators—of these scenes is Hester Ward, who beholds them all against a background imagined from the desolated Carnatic, where an old and sickly, but indomitable commander hurries hither and thither with an insufficient army to perform an impossible task, and vents his natural impatience on (among others) a certain aid-du-camp called Maxwell, who rejoices—cruel wretch!—that she whom he adores is safe and happy in Bengal!

BELVIDERE-HOUSE, ALLYPORE, *June ye 19th.*

Again a vacancy of near a month occurs in these memoirs, but on this occasion not owing to my own fault, but to the alarming indisposition of my beloved patroness. Never fully recovered from the disorder which assailed her about this time last year, Mrs Hastings has been the object all through the cold season of

[1] Clique.

the most anxious solicitude on the part of her spouse and myself, to preserve her against a second attack of the influenza, which is still the fashionable malady. Mr Hastings suffered for months from the rheumatic affection which it left in his ankles, but his lady escaped a return of the complaint until this month, when we had perhaps slightly relaxed our precautions, owing to the uncommon heat of the weather. Her enfeebled frame was little fitted to sustain such an assault, and for a time her situation caused all around her the most cruel anxiety; but she is now on the road to returning health. The King's Birthday passed this year without any other notice than the proper salutes, since it has been resolved to defer the actual celebration until the cold weather, for the sake of the ladies, who suffered horribly in former years from the obligation of appearing full-dressed[1] at such a season. On this change Mr Hastings has not ceased to felicitate himself, declaring that he would have been his lady's murderer had he continued the former custom, and in no way disturbed that 'The Bengal Gazette' swears the postponement is due to the fact that the entire settlement could not furnish the means to pay for the entertainment.

Last evening, as I sat beside Mrs Hastings' couch, reading aloud to her from the history of the charming Evelina, the Governor-General entered, announced by the black maid-servant. Gently taking the book from me as he handed me to another seat, he turned over the pages.

"With whose humours do you please yourselves to-day?" he asked us. "The amiable Madame Duval? the facetious Captain Mirvan? Pho! the book is thumbed and dog-eared as though the whole settlement had been reading it. Sure we must sign a petition—Franciscans and all—to the youthful and accomplished author that she'll pity the sorrows of the unhappy exiles in Bengal, and write 'em another book to beguile the hot weather with."

"Pray, Hastings," says his lady, with an arch glance, "did you come here to criticize novels—even Miss Burney's masterpiece?"

"My penetrating Marian! I had another object, I'll confess.

[1] That is, with Court dress and hoops.

Perhaps some rumours have reached your ears of my projected journey to Lucknow?"

"Why, indeed, dis faithful Hester, like a watch-dog, has kept them from me till this very day, but my Lady Impey was so good as to make me a visit, and she revealed 'em to me. Had I known what she was about to say, I had begged her to respect Mr Hastings' desire for secrecy."

"My Marian, you are almost cross! What but the desire to shield you from anxiety could induce your husband to conceal the matter? Moreover, 'twas only decided in Council very shortly before you fell ill, and I could not mention it. But now the time is so near at hand——"

"What! you will still go—and leave me thus?"

"My Marian, such an opportunity may never return. The ships are all despatched, the Revenue business put in train, nothing material in politics can well occur during the rains. For the first time for many years I can leave Calcutta secure that no advantage will be taken by my colleague of my absence; but who knows who may be sent us in Francis' place? The first ship that arrives of the fleet may bring me an associate who will set himself to thwart all my plans once more. By taking this journey now, I may hope to bring the affairs of Owd, Bennaris, and Berar to a favourable issue. The Nabob-Vizier has wrote to me in the most open and friendly style, entreating an interview, and I am convinced that no delegated authority can avail to restore order and prosperity to that distracted province. Something must be done at Bennaris, whether Chyte Sing be reduced to his proper condition of an ordinary zemeendar, or his obstinacy punished by actual dispossession; but my strongest inducement for visiting that place is the hope of meeting Dewaugur Pundit, who has so long dictated the politics of the Naugpoor court, and could not refuse to combine the advantage (for a Gentoo) of a visit to Bennaris with that interview for which he has expressed such earnest desires."

"Alas! what can one poor woman do against Chyte Sing, the Nabob-Vizier and Dewaugur Pundit? Leave her, Hastings, and visit them, by all means."

"Why, my dearest, I hope to visit them, certainly, but with-

out quitting my Marian more than momentarily. She can't imagine I would leave her here, or even with her kind friends at the foreign settlements, since the long separation to which I agreed so reluctantly last year—and yet so willingly, because it was to restore her to health—produced no effect at all proportionate to the pain it caused. I have consulted Jackson, he accords his permission; if she do the same, she'll honour me with her company."

"Hastings, you take my breath away! And for how long is this journey?"

"I intend to be here again in three months, travelling with a very light retinue. If I did not know that my Marian resembles me in being able to subsist with few conveniences and little state, I would not request her presence."

"A light retinue!—and you'll go outside our own territory?"

"What danger can there be? Would I suffer my Marian to quit Calcutta if I thought there was the smallest peril? No, my dearest, don't be lazy. The simple and active life you'll lead on the river will work wonders for you. Don't Beebee Ward agree with me?"

"Mrs Hastings must not exert herself beyond her strength, sir."

"Ah, Mrs Ward is a prejudiced witness. She thinks her letters from the Carnatic will be delayed in reaching her. Don't be afraid, ma'am; they shall be forwarded with my *daucks* as soon as they come in. Well, am I to be honoured? Ah, my Marian is kind—I knew it! She won't deprive her husband of her society for a quarter of a year. By the bye, Mrs Ward, has it happened that Maxwell has mentioned to you any intention of the General's of sending Colonel Stewart to take command of Pearse's detachment?"

"No, sir; but he deplores the persistent ill will with which the General views Colonel Pearse, and his declared design of breaking up the detachment and distributing it among the other brigades."

"I trust it's but a rumour, but 'tis too like the man. Poor Pearse! writing to ask me what should be his course if he were so happy as to capture Hyder or either of his sons!"

"Did you desire him to bring the gentlemen to you in chains, sir, that they might be exhibited in a cage next to the lyon in the compound at Buckingham House?"

"No, ma'am; that was 'The Bengal Gazette's' suggestion, not mine. My Marian, have you heard of Hickey's latest discovery? It seems that I am sending vast sums to Germany through good Mr Ross at Chinchura, in order to purchase from the Holy Roman Emperor a rich and extensive principality, together with letters patent creating me a Prince of the Empire. You'll find yourself a Princess yet!"

CHAPTER XXI.

A PRESENTIMENT.

On the River beyond BOGLEPOOR, *July ye 19th*, 1781.

Now that we are thus far advanced on our journey, I snatch a brief space from the dear task of detailing my recollections for the indulgent eye of Maxwell, to continue this official record, as Mr Hastings insists on styling it. Heavens! what intimate matters would he find discussed, should he ever obtain a sight of it! I should expire from shame did even his benevolent gaze rest upon my foolish scribbling. But that I am too well acquainted with his goodness of heart to fear he would ever demand to peruse it, even in his most rallying moments, I would destroy my huge piles of writing as soon as we return to Calcutta, and thus oblige Mrs Hastings, who can't even now reconcile herself to my unfeminine tastes.

We quitted Calcutta on the 7th of this month, and had been glad to do so a week earlier, could we thus have escaped the disagreeable necessity of an act similar to that to which Mr Hastings was compelled three years ago in the case of Chandernagore. On the 3rd, the Council being met to draw up the requisite credentials and instructions in view of the Governor-

General's journey, Mr Hastings was summoned out to receive a pacquet just brought up the river by the purser of his Majesty's sloop *Chacer*, acquainting him that war was broken out with the States of Holland, and reprisals ordered on their forts, towns, ships and other possessions. It was therefore necessary for Mr Hastings to disregard his ancient friendship with Mr Ross, and the constant kindness displayed by that gentleman and his lady, and order the immediate seizure of Chinchura, which was carried out that very day. In order to mitigate as far as possible the bitterness of surrender by the appearance of an overwhelming strength, the officer commanding at Chandernagore was ordered to appear before Chinchura in force, and so to summon Mr Ross, but misreading his instructions, despatched only a lieutenant and fourteen men. Wounded to the quick by this apparent contempt for his modest fortress and its garrison, the worthy Mr Ross drew up his bridges and refused to surrender, until the arrival of a regiment of Seapoys furnished him at once with a plea and a necessity. Thirty lacks of rupees and much property belonging to the Dutch East India Company was found in the place, which having been removed, Mr Ross was liberated on parole, and allowed to remain in the enjoyment of his own residence.

Mr Wheler beheld the departure of the Governor-General not altogether without satisfaction, since, though a person of moderate talents and small ambition, he is in no way averse from acting Governor-General, with the assistance of a full staff and the compliment of an aid-du-camp. Mr Hastings himself is attended on this journey by the whole of his family and a competent number of the Company's servants, (among them the unfortunate Mr Grand,) for the settlement of those affairs which have drawn him from Calcutta. Since losing Mr Markham he has attached to his person Mr Stephen Sulivan, son of his old friend the Director, and a servant of the Company at Madras, from which place he brought the news of the Carnatic disasters last September. In his lighter moments Mr Hastings pleases himself with picturing the penalties which the Court of Directors will order him for seducing one of their servants from his allotted station, notwithstanding the moderation with which he has re-

frained from claiming many of the privileges attaching to his office, and the absence of any reward for his long services. "Neither my constitution nor my religious principles," says he, "have been a charge to the Company, which has never provided me with either a surgeon or a chaplain. My name has received no addition of titles, nor my person any decorations of honour; but though my inferiors were thus signalised, my envy has not been excited. But after so many years, and in the midst of such arduous labours, it may be allowed me to select one assistant for myself in this situation which is called the first to which a British subject may attain."

In his voyage to Bengal Mr Sulivan was accompanied by his lady, who has been favoured by Mrs Hastings with an invitation to attend her up the river, as has also the amiable Mrs Motte, who is at present the victim of undeserved misfortune. The affairs of her spouse are so sadly involved that he is about to summon a meeting of his creditors, and he is glad to know his lady safe at a distance from Calcutta and under the protection of Mrs Hastings. Besides these gentlemen and ladies, and the military officers who are as usual in attendance, we have an addition to our party of a very uncommon and agreeable sort. This is Mr William Hodges, a member of the Royal Academy of Arts, who, being of a roving turn, had the good fortune to accompany the famous and lamented Captain Cook on his second voyage, and is now pursuing his observations in India, and immortalizing, by means of his skilful pencil, every scene, whether of natural or artificial beauty, that commends itself to his instructed eye. He was present at Madras during the distress and panic that followed upon Hyder's invasion, at which period, as he observes gravely, he could draw but little, and finding the desolation of the region, and the devastating hordes of Mysoreans that infested it, an obstacle to his exploration of the Carnatic, he determined upon proceeding to Calcutta. Arriving in March, he presented his credentials to Mr Hastings, the genial patron of every description of art, and having displayed his powers in the tasteful renderings he produced of views in the neighbourhood of the settlement, was complimented by an invitation from the Governor General to make one of his family in the present

journey, the pleasure of which is enhanced tenfold by the company of so enthusiastic an observer. The *Old Bengallies* of the party are astounded to learn that others perceive beauty in scenes that for them have long lost their significance, and even those most sensible to the appeal of natural objects are conscious of a feeling of shame in discovering how much they have been wont to leave slighted or unnoticed.

The aspect of the country through which we pass is so varied as to stimulate reflection on its history and present condition. From Chitpore Gaut to Muxadavad, and again from Muxadavad to Rajemahel, the river flows through a region with which we are all familiar, comprising flourishing fields, well tilled or occupied with abundant cattle, and neat villages inhabited by a swarming population. At Rajemahel the scene changes, the shores becoming lofty and arid, and the heat, even during the rains, extremely oppressive. Islands and rocks of the most curious forms are frequent objects, one of the loftiest of the former crowned with the rustic abode of a Gentoo hermit. On approaching Boglepore another change becomes apparent, the Resident's house being built upon an elevated island four miles in extent, with the river on one side and a wide creek on the other, and surrounded with an expanse of parklike country, diversified with sylvan glades and solitary trees.

The tenant of this agreeable abode, Mr Augustus Cleveland,[1] collector of Rajemahel and Boglepore, is an amiable and ingenious young gentleman, endowed with the highest talents and the best heart in the world. His district, called the Jungleterry, has the misfortune to be in part inhabited by a race styled Puharrys,[2] differing widely from the ordinary natives of Bengal. These people occupy by preference the summits of the wooded hills with which this part of the country abounds, but having little or no notion of cultivating the ground, have made it their practice for ages to descend and lay waste the more fertile plains, so that their haunts were surrounded by a belt of desert overgrown with jungle, growing wider every year. They had inspired such terror in the preceding governments that all attempts even to confine them to their fastnesses had failed, and an ex-

[1] Also spelt Clevland. [2] Paharis.

traordinary hostility raged between them and the inhabitants of the plains. Alone and unarmed, Mr Cleveland ventured into the hills in search of these strange people, and succeeded at length in gaining the ear of a deputation of their chiefs, by whom he was met and interrogated. Returning to their tribe, the delegates reported the apparition of this friendly stranger, whereupon the entire race desired to behold him. He ingratiated himself with them by the utmost kindness, giving beads to the children, despatching gifts to the women, and investing the chiefs with medals of honour. Next he selected a few of the younger men, for whom he had Seapoys' clothes made, and giving them firelocks, had them drilled. They, returning home, drilled their friends, who came to entreat an equipment from Mr Cleveland, so that from these wild races, the terrors of the region, an entire battalion was formed in less than two years. Three miles from Boglepore a camp has been established, accommodating a thousand of these Puharry troops, with their wives and children. The rudiments of industry, and the use of money, penetrating among them, have caused a revolution in the ideas of the tribe, who are fast losing their predatory habits, thus leaving open for settlement a large expanse of fertile but desolate territory. This Mr Cleveland pointed out with modest delight to the Governor-General, reminding him that here was an opening for his favourite scheme of establishing in the possession of lands of their own the wounded and invalid Seapoys who have served the Company faithfully, and enjoy a small pension, without being in a situation to rent or purchase farms. Mr Hastings was affected almost to tears at this fresh instance of Mr Cleveland's thoughtfulness, and prophesied that he would be remembered to remote ages as the benefactor of the Jungleterry.

The habitation constructed for himself by this excellent young man is an elegant and extensive building on the Italian model, standing at the head of a lawn which slopes down to the river, and is planted with beautiful flowering shrubs. Close at hand is a paddock inhabited by elks and other curious deer, these rarities being brought to Mr Cleveland by the attached subjects of his little kingdom, and the whole spot presents the neatest

and prettiest air imaginable, particularly when, as during our visit, the river is enlivened with a great fleet of boats, comprising, besides the Governor-General's pinnace, a whole quantity of budgerows, each with its own *pulwah* or kitchen-boat and *launchway* or landing-boat, and the less elegant vessels conveying attendants and guards. I was under a curious mistake, which caused some merriment, with regard to the name of the place, thinking it to be called after Mr Bogle, another of those accomplished youths whose talents and their employment of them do such honour to Mr Hastings' patronage; but Mr Cleveland explained to me that the true spelling was Bauglepore or Baughulpore,[1] and that the place enjoyed this name long before the days of the intrepid traveller to Tibbet, who is so sadly lamented.

MONGHYR, *July ye 20th.*

Of the many delightful spots visited on this journey, it's the opinion of our entire company that we have now reached the most charming. Not Ghiretty, where we landed to make a visit to the elegant Lady Coote and her amiable friend, who maintain a strict seclusion during the absence of the General; not Muxadavad, where I gained more agreeable notions of the city during a three days' sojourn with the excellent Sir John and Lady D'Oyly at the palace of Motté Gil—once the abode of the Nabob of Bengal, now transferred to the British Resident—not even Boglepore itself, with the society of its amiable and accomplished host, has produced upon me so pleasing an impression. The fort, as it is styled, of Monghyr is charmingly situated on a bend of the Ganges, which at this season has all the appearance of an inland sea, bounded only by the Carrackpore Mountains. The entire extent of two miles of wall is thus surrounded with water, a deep ditch completing the circuit for a short distance. Inside this wall the eye is delighted with a varied prospect of modern buildings, ruined palaces, gardens, tanks and plantations. The abode of the officer in command, now surrendered for the use of the Governor-General's party, was built by the great and gallant General Goddard during his residence here,

[1] Bhagalpur.

and occupies a level platform of rock at the summit of the rising ground on which the old palace of Sultan Soojah formerly stood. No attempt has been made to strengthen the fortifications in any modern or European style, but the place serves as a depot for arms and ammunition, and accommodates a considerable garrison, besides affording a temporary abode for invalids from the stations higher up the river. So invigorating is the atmosphere that I hailed with pleasure the sight of the first fireplace I have met with in Bengal.

Early this morning I enjoyed the advantage of making the circuit of the place in company with Mr Hodges, who, when we arrived last night, could hardly restrain his eagerness to visit the remains of antiquity he beheld on every side. Attended by a sufficient number of servants and guides, for our protection rather from serpents than from any other danger, we visited first what is known as the Rock of Monghyr, on which stands a building designed as a Gentoo temple, with a bathing-place beneath, in compliance with the maxims of that creed. The Mossolman Sultan Soojah desecrated the place by turning it into a mosque, and at present it serves as a hospital. Turning next to the ruins of the palace, we were shown a large well, which is said never to run dry, owing, as is alleged, to a subterranean communication with the river. Our attendants, in styling this *the singing well*, assured us that once in every seven years the sound of music and singing, as though from a company of notch-girls performing in a zenannah, may be heard at the bottom; but we were so unfortunate as not to be arrived at the proper time. To account for this sound, they informed us that Sultan Soojah, being driven from this place to Rajemahel, threw into the well or immured in the walls such of his women as he found it inconvenient to convey with him in his flight. This shocking history threatening to destroy my pleasure in the excursion, Mr Hodges was so obliging as to enter into a disquisition upon the characteristical features of the Gentoo and Moorish architecture around us, showing its inferiority to the classical style, and illustrating his contentions in what I thought a very odd manner, by examples drawn from his experiences of Otaheite. So much is this his custom, indeed, that there's a saying among the young

gentlemen that did Mr Hodges meet with a Rajah-Pout[1] in his complete national habit, he would instantly discover a resemblance between his dress and that of an Otaheitan chieftain. My thoughts thus insensibly diverted from the disagreeable topic, we ascended the wall of the inland side of the place, obtaining a charming prospect of the surrounding country and the excellent roads constructed by former rulers to approach this residence of theirs, and then returned to the house, where Mr Hastings, observing the enhanced sprightliness of my appearance, rallied his lady on her laziness in not seeking like me to enjoy the benefits of the morning air.

MONGHYR, *July ye 24th.*

The tranquillity of our stay in this most charming spot has been disturbed by alarms of a vague but disquieting nature. To-morrow having been fixed for the resumption of our journey, Mrs Hastings and I were occupying the idle hours of the noonday seclusion with a thorough examination of her jewel-cases, lest their precious contents should have suffered any injury from the river air, my patroness polishing each piece with her own hands, while I restored them to their places. Mr Hastings entering with an air of uneasiness, I offered to withdraw, but he desired my presence, and seating himself on a lounge, passed his hand over his brow with an air of indecision such as I have rarely observed in him. His lady, watching him without appearing to do so as she held up the jewels to the light, made no remark, and at length he spoke.

"My Marian, I desire to throw myself on your mercy. You'll think you have a monstrous changeable husband, but I hope you'll permit me to continue this journey alone."

"Hastings, you are going into danger. You have received bad news."

"On my honour, my dearest, there's nothing of the sort. Markham sends word that Chyte Sing is terrified by my approach, and will come as far as Buxar to meet me in the most humble and submissive style, proposing to deprecate my wrath. No, all is going well; but I have the strangest—the most unac-

[1] Rajput.

countable presentiment, which warns me to leave you here. It must be for your health that I am anxious—I can imagine no other reason. Markham is young, and lacking in the experience only gained after a long residence in this climate, and even his deep attachment for us both might fail to make him sufficiently careful. Middleton, though owing everything to me, has exhibited a strange negligence more than once of late. Think, my Marian, what your husband's remorse would be, if, owing to some avoidable accident, your constitution should suffer!"

"But tell me, Hastings, is it well to rely thus implicitly on a feeling so foreign to your nature, so——"

"So destructive of the happiness I had anticipated from this jaunt? My Marian, have I not asked myself the question many times over? But the feeling persists, and I can only say that if you accompany him, your husband's thoughts will be distracted and his mind disturbed at the very period when calmness and calculation are most essential to the performance of his task."

"You offer me no choice, Hastings, but I trust you'll yet find your fears unnecessary. Come then, promise me this. Proceed as you desire to Bennaris, leaving me here, but send for me when you have satisfied yourself of the health of the place. In like manner you may proceed to Lucnow, but permit me to follow. What say you?"

"Why, that my Marian presents me a harder temptation than I can resist. She knows I would take any step to avert the long separation I feared inevitable. So be it, then. You remain here, with the ladies who accompany you, and the worthy Sands in attendance. When I have settled Chyte Sing's affair, and am ready to watch for a while the effects of my measures, I'll either return for you myself, or send one of my gentlemen with the pinnace to attend you to Bennaris. My dearest, this graceful compliance has removed a weight from my spirit. Pray, Mrs Ward, take example against the time you make poor Maxwell happy. Not by a rigorous persistence, but by an obliging complacency, does a lady best maintain her empire, however clearly she may be in the right."

I quitted the apartment a good deal disturbed by what I had heard, for I could not rid myself of the fear that the dangers

facing Mr Hastings' expedition were other than such as menaced the health, and after supper, finding myself attended by Major Palmer, I ventured to ask him his opinion of the political prospect. But how fervently I wished for the presence of Maxwell, who would have been willing to consider the posture of affairs with me as a rational creature, when for an entire ten minutes I got nothing but idle compliments, and jocose reflections on the infrequent and personal interest discovered in politics by the ladies!

"Sir," I said at last, "if you consider my curiosity unwarrantable, or fear my forcing your confidence, I had been better pleased to be told so. Pray pardon my importunity, and forget it."

"Nay, ma'am," he cried quickly, rising at the same moment I did. "You're very welcome to anything I can tell you, but i' faith, I don't know what to make of the matter myself. Will you honour me with your attention if I confess I have done my utmost to induce Mr Hastings to take a larger force with him on this errand?"

I sat down again. "Then what do you fear, sir?"

"Why, ma'am, I don't precisely know, but it seems to me that, confiding in what the Moors call the *Eckball*,[1] or luck, of our rule in India, Mr Hastings is very gravely exposing his person, which is the talisman of that rule. He thinks there's no fear of Chyte Sing's opposing him, and I trust with all my heart he may be justified."

"But you apprehend that resistance will be offered, sir?"

"Chyte Sing, ma'am, like most of these Indian princes, has but two passions—avarice and display, and both of 'em are menaced by Mr Hastings' approach, the one by his demand of a military contingent, the other by his purpose to exact a heavy fine. The man has been let alone too long, till he's grown to believe himself something greater than the ordinary zemeendar—though this was no fault of Mr Hastings', who was constantly obstructed in bringing him to reason. That Chyte Sing perceived this was shown by his sending a messenger to salute Sir John Clavering on his usurpation of the government, and again

[1] Ikbal.

by the encouragement he took from hearing through his Vackeel in Calcutta of the dissensions in the Council. Colonel Camac's force in Malva suffered the extremity of distress last year through his delay in paying the contribution demanded of him, which was only sent when he received the news of Mr Francis' approaching departure. He took the opportunity to raise his rents, laying the blame on us, but sweeping a very handsome profit into his own coffers. This year also he has offered his jewels to pawn, and called in all the money he had lodged in the hands of the Bennaris bankers, bringing about the failure of many of 'em —all to show the pitiful situation to which he is reduced, and to inflame the people against us."

"But if he pays in the end, where is the object of all this, sir?"

"Perhaps the gentleman has a taste for comedy, ma'am. But it's in my mind that he's playing a deep game. At present all the neighbouring princes despise him as an upstart of low *cast*, with whom they can make no common interest; but should he lead the way in a successful defiance of our power, he might look for the adhesion of any that had a grievance against us. Mr Francis' ancient clients, the Rannies of Burdwan and Rajeshahee, and all our other zemeendars who would prefer to be independent, would pardon his origin and join with him. 'Tis this makes it impossible for Mr Hastings to overlook his behaviour. If we lose one, we lose all."

"And you think it's in his power to pay what's demanded of him?"

"Questionless, ma'am, for besides the rents of his rich zemeendarry, he has monstrous treasures laid up; and as for the thousand horse he protests himself unable to supply, we're informed he has double that number in ordinary attendance on him. But should he succeed in proving poverty, he'll find a lenient judge in Mr Hastings, who is never too proud to reduce his demands if they are seen to have been excessive—as witness the two thousand horse he required of him at first."

"I trust there will be no difficulty in arriving at an accommodation!" I cried.

"Why, so say I, ma'am, and the more so that the audacity of

Mr Hastings' method is likely to take Chyte Sing by surprise. He has always yielded to pressure hitherto, and I doubt his possession of the military spirit. I should not be surprised if the Owd business were the more dangerous of the two."

"But sure the Nabob-Vizier is friendly!" I cried.

"So he says, ma'am; but Mr Hastings goes to Owd on an errand that's bound to set everybody against him. He must curtail the unworthy pleasures of the prince himself, and induce him to resume the valuable grants he has made to his favourites, both European and Indian. Both these measures are necessary if prosperity is to be restored to the distracted province, and the arrears owing to the Company to be paid. But the first will set Azoph-ool-Dowlah himself against him, and the second will open the entire question of the Begums, who have contrived to draw a great part of the wealth and power of the country into their own hands."

"What surprise would it create in Europe, to hear that such a thing was possible to two secluded females!" said I.

"Why, ma'am, the circumstances are unusual, it must be confessed. The Bow Begum, Azoph-ool-Dowlah's mother, is said to be a woman of extraordinary strong character. She was estranged from her husband, Soojah Dowlah, by his vices, but on hearing that he was hard pressed by the English after the battle of Buxar, joined him with all the cash she had amassed, which these ladies do in a very surprising way. Affected to gratitude, he gave her in future the charge of all his treasure, which she kept in her own apartments, so that not an anna could be drawn out without her authorisation. At Soojah Dowlah's death, she and her mother-in-law, the Nabob Begum, claimed the whole of the treasure by virtue of a will which they have never offered to produce. By Mossolman law this omission invalidates their claim, even had the treasure been the private property of the late prince, and not a hereditary possession. But when young Azoph-ool-Dowlah demanded it as the sole means of paying his father's debts, the ladies refused it, and were upheld by Mr Francis and his two friends, who forced the youthful ruler to content himself with a quarter of the treasure, according to the Begums' computation. The remainder, together

with a very rich *jaghire*, was left to them, with the result that they have traded upon the Nabob-Vizier's necessities to obtain other jaghires as the price of assistance in cash, until they are practically independent princes. How are these females, in whom apparently not a particle of the maternal sentiment remains, to be induced to disgorge their ill-gotten gains, secured to them by the guarantee of the Council?"

"Indeed I can't tell," said I, "unless Mr Hastings be admitted to plead with them through a curtain, and thus arouse their compassion for their unfortunate son and grandson."

"But suppose, ma'am, they prefer to employ the money in bribing the Nabob-Vizier to ally himself with them against us? He's in desperate need of cash, they have always exhibited a hatred of the British. How if they seek to seize Mr Hastings, and hold him a hostage for our total withdrawal from Owd?"

"Oh, pray, sir, don't suggest these horrors!" I cried. "Thank Heaven, Mr Hastings won't travel solitary."

"Why, no, ma'am, there will be two or three companies of Seapoys and some thirty Europeans with him—enough to make a fight for it—and the river as a line of retreat. Not that I would venture to utter the word retreat to Mr Hastings, save as a means for preparing a fresh advance."

CHAPTER XXII.

A REVOLT.

MONGHYR, *August ye 19th*, 1781.

Since the departure of Mr Hastings, our existence here has been the most simple and regular imaginable, and I have the pleasure to see my patroness improve daily in health and spirits from the invigorating air. The Governor-General keeps her informed daily of his progress, and besides his letters the *dauck* brings in reports from the gentlemen who attend him, sup-

plementing his brief epistles. We learn that on landing at Patna the banks of the river were thronged by multitudes anxious to behold their ruler, to so great an extent that there was not a window, a wall nor a roof, that lacked its complement of gazers. When Mr Hastings stepped on shore, these crowds so pressed upon him as to impede his progress, attracted by the benevolent simplicity of his appearance, and his care to restrain the chubdars who preceded him, and, with their usual arrogance, were about to beat back the people with their sticks. At Buxar the Governor-General was met by the recalcitrant Chyte Sing, who has displayed an uncommon eagerness to avert his wrath since hearing of his approach, even offering a contribution of twenty lacks to supply the necessities of the Bengal Government. Of this offer no notice was taken, Mr Hastings resolving to teach Chyte Sing a lesson that won't need repetition, so say the gentlemen. The Raja presented himself at Buxar at the head of a whole fleet of boats, crowded with as many as two thousand armed and chosen men, whose appearance was in itself both a refutation of his assertion of inability to furnish a contingent, and a gross breach of decorum, since Mr Hastings was attended by so small an escort. Having paid the customary duty of respect by a visit on his first arrival, Chyte Sing made a second the following morning, in the course of which he laid his turband upon Mr Hastings' knees, as a token of the most abject submission and reverence, and deprecated his wrath with a thousand pleas and with floods of tears, only to receive the same answer as before, viz., that the Governor-General would enquire into his conduct at Bennaris, and there determine what excuse might be allowed him.

Arriving at Bennaris five days ago, Mr Hastings took up his quarters in a commodious situation in the suburbs of the city, called the garden of Mahdew Doss.[1] Writing to his lady that same evening, he observes that he declined the visit offered by Chyte Sing on his arrival, designing to show him that he stood in the position of one accused, and must justify his behaviour before he could be received on amicable terms. At the same time, he sent to him by the hands of Mr Markham a clear state-

[1] Mahadeo Das.

ment of the offences charged against him, desiring his immediate answer, which was expected the next day. In this letter, which was received by Mrs Hastings to-day, the Governor-General included a most gratifying report of the health and spirits of all his company, and adds that Mr Markham is performing his duties in a style worthy of the highest praise, though slightly too apt to resign himself to the direction of the servants left by his predecessor. Of these, his head chubdar, Cheitram, a Brahmin of the highest *cast*, behaves to the inhabitants of the place with the brutality which Mr Hastings has always sternly repressed in his own attendants, and the two *moolavies*, or clerks, he suspects of acting an incendiary part between the youthful Resident and the Raja. In addition to pointing out to Mr Markham the injury done him with the people by these unworthy recipients of his confidence, Mr Hastings is resolved to scrutinise with the utmost minuteness any evidence offered by them against Chyte Sing, thus affording that prince every the most complete opportunity to vindicate the purity of his intentions.

MONGHYR, *August ye 23rd.*

To write of the terrible alarms of yesterday is the sole occupation possible at this early hour, when I can't sleep, and dare not move about. My beloved patroness is sleeping, exhausted by the force of the contending emotions which distracted her until far into the night, and stirs uneasily if I watch her, while the slight murmur of my pen appears to exert a soothing effect. Will it be to violate her confidence if I set down the history she poured last night into my ears? Assuredly not, since this record will be seen but by the eyes of one other besides myself, and to that other I should rejoice to exhibit what may serve, not to justify—that could never be—but in some degree to excuse the initial error which has caused scandal to so many.

The trials of yesterday began early in the morning, when Captain Sands, the aid-du-camp left in attendance on Mrs Hastings, coming to enquire her wishes for the day, I went out to him in some surprise at his untimely intrusion, to tell him that she had only now partaken of the first breakfast, and was still dressing. He informed me to my dismay that he had

adopted this means of obtaining an interview with me out of hearing of my patroness, having received advices from several quarters that a grave disaster had occurred, involving a rebellion at Bennaris and a military action, the result of which was doubtful, some saying that Mr Hastings had made his escape to the strong fortress of Chunargur, in our possession, some few miles higher up the river, others that he had not. Knowing the inventive turn of the Indians, said Captain Sands, he would have been disposed to discredit these rumours, but for the fact that during the last two days there have been no daucks, which had hitherto arrived punctually every day. This apparent confirmation of the worst reports struck me dumb with horror, but I quickly recovered sufficiently to concert with Captain Sands to spare Mrs Hastings, who must even now be wondering at my protracted absence. We agreed that I should forestall her enquiries for letters by informing her that according to a rumour that had reached the Captain, Chyte Sing was manifesting a spirit of independency calculated seriously to displease the Governor-General, who had withdrawn himself to Chunar to mark his sense of the Raja's improper behaviour, and that the daucks must necessarily be irregular until fresh dispositions could be made. The Captain undertaking to maintain a strict watch all day, and keep from Mrs Hastings' presence all who might be likely to disturb her tranquillity, I hastened to Mrs Motte to beg her to detain Mrs Sulivan as much as possible at her side. A certain lack of cordiality, I might almost say coolness, has arisen between this young lady and our patroness, by whose fault I won't pretend to decide. I believe with all my heart that Mrs Sulivan is innocent of offence, and that the lack of attention Mrs Hastings discerns in her is wholly accidental, but I can't help seeing that both ladies are happier apart. Returning to my patroness's apartment, I gave her the agreed message, at which she displayed a good deal of agitation, former rumours and the stoppage of the daucks contributing to render her anxious, but as the day passed, and no further disquieting report reached her, she became more composed. Towards the end of the afternoon we started to make the tour of a portion of the walls and inhale the fresh air, with Captain Sands in

attendance and the servants following, and Mrs Hastings recovered her spirits to some degree. She was conversing with the Captain, and I had dropped behind a pace or two, when I remarked something unusual in the song of a low-*cast* woman, the *dye* or nurse in attendance upon the wife of an officer quartered here, who was sitting in the varendar of one of the buildings we passed, dandling an infant. At first I had no thought but that she was soothing the child with the song which is commonly upon the lips of these females, owing to their admiration of the state displayed by the Governor-General upon occasions of ceremony :—

> "*Hattee pur howdah, ghora pur zeen,*
> *Juldee baur jauta Mester Hushteen,*"

or, as it might roughly be rendered in English,

> "Caparisoned elephants, horses to ride,
> Forth Mr Hastings sped with pride."

But observing more closely the words of this woman, I heard,

> "*Ghora pur howdah, hattee pur zeen,*
> *Juldee baug gueeya Mester Hushteen,*"[1]

or,

> "Saddle on elephant, howdah on steed,
> Away Mr Hastings fled with speed."

There was an impudent leer in the woman's eye as she caught my shocked and enquiring gaze, and seeing Captain Sands turn his head slightly, I perceived that he also had heard her words. As soon as I reached Mrs Hastings' side, he made an excuse to return for his handkerchief, which he had dropped, but I knew he designed to question the woman, and discover how such a creature had gained the information that prompted her to this piece of audacity. When he rejoined us, he took advantage of Mrs Hastings' engaging for a moment in conversation with an

[1] The original form of the couplet is only preserved, so far as I am aware, by Bishop Heber, who has been subjected to some ridicule by those who have not compared the wording of the two versions, as having mistaken for admiration what was meant for contempt, but he is quite justified on an examination of the words.—S. C. G.

invalid officer we found sitting in his palanqueen enjoying the air to whisper to me,

"She declares that Mr Hastings is escaped to Chunar with the utmost loss and confusion, and that there has been a frightful massacre of Europeans."

"But when?" I cried in a whisper, if that may be.

"Last night, so she says."

"But Chunar is five days from here, at the very least."

"These Indians have ways of conveying news that we can't discover. I would not discredit it for that, but we will say nothing at present."

How I contrived to hide my uneasiness from Mrs Hastings' sharp eyes I know not, but before we returned to the house we perceived a sort of excitement among the servants on the steps, and many voices informed us in respectful accents that a *tappal*, or running messenger, was arrived. Captain Sands hastened to interrogate the man, and brought him to us almost before we had mounted the steps, regardless of the wildness of his aspect, for to an almost complete absence of clothing he joined a peculiarity which made his appearance in the presence of Europeans a grave indecorum, in wearing nothing upon his head.

"He bears a concealed message, ma'am! He has been stopped and searched several times!" cried the Captain, and the dauck-waller took from his ear a small piece of a quill, which he handed to Mrs Hastings, making signs that she would find the message inside. Deeply affected, my patroness retired to her own apartments, whither I followed her, poor Mrs Sulivan, in the most frightful anxiety for her spouse, forcing herself in also. In the ante-room we were joined by Captain Sands, as soon as he had ordered the messenger to be taken care of. In silence we watched Mrs Hastings unroll from the quill the letter, which was written in the minutest possible handwriting upon the thinnest of paper, and read it with an extraordinary composure. Presently she turned to us.

"Mr Hastings is well and in good spirits," she said. "An attempt to arrest the Raja resulted in the murder of two companies of Seapoys and three Europeans, and de escape of the Prince. Reinforcements have been summoned from Chunar, and

Major Popham has brought in the rest of his battalion from Merzapore. Mr Hastings begs me to feel no uneasiness." She laughed, in a sufficiently strange style, and Mrs Sulivan pressed, weeping, for news of Mr Sulivan, which could not be given her.

"Is Mr Hastings at Chunar, ma'am?" asked Captain Sands eagerly.

"No, still at Mahdew Doss's garden. He writes on the seventeenth, Friday. What reason is there to think he is at Chunar?"

Hastily recollecting himself, Captain Sands told her the more cheering of the different rumours that had reached him during the day, dwelling especially on the great strength of the fortress of Chunargur, and its convenience for military operations. Mrs Hastings heard him very quietly, and conversed with him for fully half an hour, to all appearance as much at ease and in spirits as I have ever seen her, while Mrs Sulivan wept incessantly, and asked perpetual questions. But in the midst of making the shrewdest enquiries imaginable as to the distance of Chunar from such stations as Dynapore, Futtygur and Khaunpoor, and the length of time required for reinforcements to reach it, my patroness sprang suddenly from her seat, and pressing her hands to her head, cried out in a loud voice,

"No more, no more! Why will you deceive me? He an't at Chunar in safety, but in Mahdew Doss's garden, with no means of defence, and de Raja's army and de city mob thirsting for his blood!"

"Ma'am, we trust——" began Captain Sands, confounded by her vehemence.

"Trust—in what? In the words of a common female who can have no possible means of knowing the truth! He is in the midst of enemies. What can the few Europeans avail who are with him? Oh, Hastings, you may be suffering, sick, dying —and your Marian is far away!"

With this she broke into so terrible a passion of grief that nothing we could do or say availed to calm her, the danger Mr Hastings had escaped, and that to which he might even then be exposed, appearing equally present to her mind. In this histeria she remained above a quarter of an hour, her women

adding their efforts to mine in vain, and the unfortunate Captain Sands, in the most violent distress, offering such entreaties and consoling suggestions as occurred to him. When the extreme vehemence of the attack was somewhat abated, she beckoned him closer as I supported her in my arms.

"We go on to Patna to-morrow," she said.

"Madam!" cried the poor Captain, "sure you must know there's nothing would distress Mr Hastings so cruelly."

"When Mr Hastings is in danger, his wife's place is at his side. If he's unhappily—— But no, I won't picture it; I will be calm. Oblige me by having the boats prepared, sir."

"Pardon me, ma'am, but I dare not let you quit this place without an escort, and the garrison here can't spare one. By your leave, I'll despatch a hircarra immediately to Colonel Ahmuty, asking for a guard to be sent down from Bankypore. Then we could advance the day after to-morrow."

"Is Captain Sands here to receive my orders, or I his?"

"Ma'am, I am here to obey Mr Hastings' orders in guarding you. What would be his feelings were you captured on your voyage?"

"Be it so, then. I have not the strength to wrangle with you, sir. If Mr Hastings were here—— Ah, Hastings, Hastings!"

She fell into a fit of low, painful weeping, and fearing a return of the histeria, I desired Captain Sands' assistance to carry her to bed, commending Mrs Sulivan, who was also in a very sad way, to the care of Mrs Motte. When they were gone, I dismissed the black women quickly, and seating myself beside my beloved patroness, ventured to raise her head on my shoulder. She turned and seized my hands so tightly as to hurt me.

"Ah, my dearest Hessy," she sobbed, "to them he is only the Governor-General, but to us——!"

"To me, ma'am, the kindest friend, the most generous benefactor!" I sobbed in my turn.

"And to me the most considerate, the noblest husband dat ever blessed an unworthy woman far above her deserts. Oh, Hessy, I can't believe it. Can it be that the world revolves unchanged, that the face of nature continues to smile, and Hastings is no more?"

"No, dear ma'am, it can't be!" I cried. "But oh, if it should!" and we mingled our tears and sobs and prayers until Mrs Hastings fell into a sort of exhaustion. Even then, however, she would be doing nothing but recalling Mr Hastings' boundless generosity, his delicate kindness, his playful humour, and his infinite affection for herself.

"Dear madam," I ventured at last, "won't it only lacerate your spirits the more to revive these affecting memories?"

"That may be, but I can't but do it. Ah, Hester, to have enjoyed him so short a time!"

"Nay, ma'am, won't you rather thank Heaven that for the space of four entire years you have been permitted to call Mr Hastings husband?"

"That I will!" she cried. "And did my kind Hester but know the full significance of what she says! Nay, but I'll tell you, though you'll perhaps shrink from me, turn away from me."

"Never, dear madam, never!" I sought to assure her, but she continued as though she had not heard me, in a feeble but resolved voice.

"Does my Hester know how I saw him first? It was on board de *Duke of Grafton*, when he was returning to Madras as second in Council, after his loss of fortune. Among the other passengers were a nobleman of Franconia and his lady. The gentleman had failed to support his dignity by the profession of arms, and having a turn to miniature-painting, and interest at Court, had obtained leave for the exercise of his talent in the Company's East India settlements.[1] I won't describe him. You shall hear. Oh, my dear Hessy—" and again my unfortunate patroness catched my hands in a painful clasp—"*dat man vass de teffle!*" her English becoming imperfect, as often happens when her spirits are agitated.

"Dear madam," I said, fearing her mind was disturbed, "forget him. Pray quit these moving topics. Try to rest."

"I am not mad. You think so? I will tell you. I won't think of him. You shall tell me if the fault was mine. No, I am calm—quite calm. The round-house was reserved for the

[1] Baron Imhoff is said by Hancock and others to have gone out as a cadet, but he certainly painted portraits for money while in India.

use of Mr Hastings, who was at that time prone to withdraw himself from the general company to meditate on the high duties to which he was returning. I was young, giddy, inconsiderate, resenting the appropriation of the finest apartment in the ship to a single person. One morning I had a fancy to look out from the balcony, and waiting until I thought I heard Mr Hastings step out on deck, I mounted boldly up the quarter-gallery stairs into the round-house—and dere sat Mr Hastings, in his nightcap and gown, reading! Imagine my consternation! I was covered with confusion, but only for a moment. Without a trace of that embarrassment which might have been anticipated, or of resentment for the intrusion on his retirement, he converted my indiscretion into a favour. 'Twas the first time we had met, but he disclaimed my apologies, and entreated dat Mr and Mrs Imhoff would do him the favour to consider his apartment as their own at any period of the day. Mr Imhoff was by no means backward in accepting of the invitation, foreseeing the advantage he would gain in Madras from the friendship and countenance of so respectable a character, and I—what shall I say, Hessy? The mildness of Mr Hastings' visage, the benevolence of his disposition, the nobility of his sentiments—I had never encountered such a man. Mr Imhoff was a true German—what in Brandenbourg they call a Younker—a rough country 'squire, in no way polished by much experience of camps. I was married to him as a child—without choice of mine, need I say it?—and at first he had been kind to me after a rude fashion. But even that was past. I was become my husband's drudge, his runner of errands; in every company I had de mortification to be aware that Baron Imhoff was the sole person that considered the Baroness neither handsome nor agreeable. In these cases I knew my danger; I was on my guard against the gentlemen who were anxious to assure me of the superiority of their taste to that of Mons. le Baron. But with Mr Hastings I had no such fear. The considerate kindness that he showed to me I observed in him towards all other females, even—could such a thing be imagined—towards the black maid-servants on board. His assiduities kept Mr Imhoff in a perpetual good-humour, thus securing to me an ease to which I had long been

a stranger, but he showed no distinguishing civilities of an invidious sort to myself. The voyage was long, and shortly after passing the Cape Mr Hastings fell ill of what they call here in their odd way a *pucca* fever. Mr Imhoff was filled with concern, and I joined my lamentations with his, that so valuable a life should lie at the mercy of a ship's surgeon and a rough English servant. In Germany we an't like your English fine ladies, Hester; we take the care of those who are sick, prepare medicines and cordials, even cook suitable food; and I lamented to Mr Imhoff that we had not Mr Hastings a resident in our own house. 'What does that matter?' says he in his rough way; 'if you have a mind to nurse him, I beg you'll do it, for if he die we shall be at a pretty pass when we come to land at Madras.' These coarse expressions filled me with indignation, but from my long acquaintance with Mr Imhoff I knew better than to offer any remonstrance. With his full consent and encouragement I undertook the care of Mr Hastings, and without vanity I may say, as the surgeon assured me, that my tending saved his life, so that even the rude fellow, his servant Hugh, could never sufficiently testify his gratitude towards me on his master's behalf. But what was my grief and astonishment, Hessy, the first moment that Mr Hastings regained his senses, to find his eyes fixed upon me with aversion, even dislike. Approaching him with the food I had prepared with my own hands, he motioned me away, and in broken accents declared he would sooner have died than exhibited himself to me in so degraded a situation, and imposed upon me such disgusting tasks. I was very bold, Hester. I told him that when he was fully recovered he might exclude me from his cabin if he desired it, but that I was far too proud of my work to leave it incomplete, and he would do well to reconcile himself to my care with a good grace. A visit from Mr Imhoff, who bluntly told him his life was too precious for us to lose any chance of preserving it, and den left him, declaring he could not abide de smell of gruel, served somewhat to pacify him, but he continued to see me perform any the most ordinary service for him with the keenest reluctance. But this wounded me the less that I saw him making rapid progress to recovery, and found him every day more able to attend upon

me than I on him. And de bluff good humour of Mr Imhoff during this convalescence—nothing that I could say would represent it to you in the least! Has my kind Hester no pity for me? I had no thought of wrong, neither had Mr Hastings. But one evening, when I came to his side as he lay on the poop to remind him that it was time to seek his apartment and avoid de night airs, in an agitated voice he begged me to remain for a moment and listen to what he had to say. In the most moving terms he besought me to persuade Mr Imhoff to proceed to Bengall, instead of landing at Madras. Can my Hester conceive the amazement, the mortification, that filled my mind? Believe me, I was inexperienced, heedless, but not criminal. The ingratitude of the person for whom I felt such unbounded esteem demolished me. Mr Hastings saw my silence, my averted visage, read both correctly, and his resolution failed him. In a hasty voice, broken with emotion, he told me that he had seen me too much for his peace. But what had brought about this perception, Hessy? Was it, could it have been, a word from the wretch who called himself my husband? I fear, I am almost certain, that it was. Mr Hastings said he could trust himself, but he had too much veneration for me to expose me to the aspersions which might result from the discovery of his passion in some unguarded moment—perhaps the delirium of a fever. He had interest with the Calcutta Government, and would do his utmost to provide for us there. My Hester, I did not pause for an instant, for during his speech I had learnt, what he had too much delicacy and right feeling even to enquire, that I also had a secret to conceal. Placing a heavy constraint on myself, I replied dat I appreciated his motives, and would do my best to persuade Mr Imhoff in the direction of his wishes. I had no doubt of my success, for this plain promise of assistance in Bengall was far beyond anything Mr Imhoff could have hoped for at Madras; but what was my horror when he refused even to entertain the notion! With jeers and coarse laughter he conveyed to me his determination to remain at Madras, and draw money from Mr Hastings on the score of that unhappy secret which had just been entrusted to me, and which he had divined, I know not how. We would bleed him together, he assured me,

using an odious phrase he had catched up in England. Can my Hester picture my feelings at that moment? We have, alas! at our German Courts too many of those miserable men who are content to profit by the dishonour of their wives, but little as I was able to respect Mr Imhoff, I had never suspected in him the possibility of such baseness as this. But even in the stupefaction of the moment my secret gave me courage. I told Mr Imhoff calmly that I had endured cruelly at his hands, but this outrage was too great. If he persisted in his intention of remaining at Madras, I would quit him and return to Europe, and dere demand a divorce, which in our law-courts is granted for an incompatibility of temper. I said dis in all innocence, having been brought up to see nothing wrong in such an accommodation, and never dreaming of the possible interpretation of my words. How shall I describe to you, Hester, the glance of malignity that wicked man turned upon me. 'And return to marry Hastings?' says he. 'No, my beloved Anna Maria, that won't suit me. You can only obtain your divorce by mutual consent, and my consent must be paid for.' I turned my back upon him, and he went chuckling out of the cabin, leaving me plunged in the most abject misery. I threw myself on my cot, and again a certain strength came to me. Mr Hastings should not be sacrificed to the weakness of an unhappy woman and de wickedness of an avaricious man. I would suggest to him to have Mr Imhoff and myself deported as interlopers and returned to Europe. Should his powers be insufficient for this, I felt I had it in me to make some foolish smuggling venture that should enable, nay, compel him to act. Having taken this resolution, I was happier, for I rejoice to remember that I was conscious of more anxiety for Mr Hastings' reputation than for any gratification to myself, as he was for mine. But even as I set my foot on the floor, I heard a voice outside de curtain which hung at the door of the cabin. It was the servant Hugh, who delivered to me a chitt from his master with the most perfect respect. When I opened it—oh, pity me, Hessy, for I was plunged afresh into that conflict which I had but just victoriously surmounted. Can Mr Imhoff have had de inconceivable baseness to suggest his infamous bargain to Mr

Hastings? I can't tell; there are some things I have never dared to ask, even of my husband, and in accordance with his usual scrupulous delicacy, his billet gave me no hint of such a thing. It had occurred to him, he said, that in Germany it was possible to procure divorces on other grounds than that which was alone considered sufficient in the English courts. He could not pretend not to have observed that my present situation was not such as a female of my family and merits deserved. He would not urge again the affection which he had so unhappily, in the existing circumstances, conceived for me, but if it would meet my wishes for proceedings to be instituted in the Franconian courts which would free me from my present ties, he would trust to be able to recommend himself to me in due time, and perhaps at length prevail with me to make, of the least deserving, the happiest of men. Do you wonder that the temptation assailed me with peculiar force, Hessy? Smarting under the discovery of the absolute baseness of Mr Imhoff, newly aware that these months of acquaintance with Mr Hastings had taught me, alas! the lesson he also had learnt, I almost yielded, but resisted in the end—for my children's sake. That my Charles and my Julius should be torn from me, taught to blush for their mother's name—I could not endure it, whatever my refusal might cause me to undergo at Mr Imhoff's hands. And then—oh, Hester, can you credit that such a man exists? Is he a man, and not, as I said, a devil?—Mr Imhoff offered voluntarily to resign all claim to his sons, to hand them over, as he phrased it, to Mr Hastings and to me, without so much as exacting any stipulation for their future. I can't describe to you the agony of my mind. It seemed to me that my babes and I were being sold like the Coffrees in the slave-market, our only hope a benevolent purchaser. I could resist no longer. In the dull rage and misery that possessed me, I granted Mr Hastings an interview. I threw my infants and myself upon his mercy in a style that would have meant our common destruction had I been dealing with any other man in the world. But he—oh, Hester, can you wonder at the passionate admiration I have, and must always have, for him?—exhibited still the same delicate consideration for the unhappy creature who had been so

cruelly humiliated by her rightful protector. 'Twas not necessary for him to bid me have no fear, I had none as soon as I heard his voice—for I could not bring myself to look into his face. All should be done in the most delicate and genteel style, he assured me; he would wait in joyful patience until he could make me his wife in sight of all the world, and until that day he would continue, if I permitted it, a humble friend to me, a benefactor to my babes, and a liberal patron to Mr Imhoff. What could I do but adopt his advice, grateful that it was this man out of all the world with whom I had to do? One error he fell into, and only one, and this was because the natural goodness of his heart would not suffer him to withdraw an offer he had made before his illness to Mr Imhoff of a residence in his house for us all. I wept, entreated, urged; Mr Hastings, perceiving the transports into which I was thrown, did his best to incite Mr Imhoff privately to withdraw his acceptance, but in vain, and the plan, so open to objection, was carried out. I own I trembled when we took up our abode at the Mount. I could trust Mr Hastings, I could trust myself, but I feared de ill-natured remarks of the inhabitants of the settlement, to whom the singular posture of our affairs became known in an inconceivably short space. Once more I threw myself upon the goodness of Mr Hastings, devising with him the restraints to be maintained between our households, and so punctiliously were these observed dat when we quitted Madras there was not a lady of that place refused me her countenance. When Mr Hastings was about to remove to Bengall, I insisted that we should establish ourselves in a separate abode, from which, very shortly after, my little Julius left me to join his brother in England. In the same year, the news arriving that the divorce was about to be pronounced, Mr Imhoff departed also, remarking to me in his pleasant style that he would now find a wife more to his mind than a romantic creature who did not know which side her bread was buttered. He forwarded in due course the news of our freedom, with the intelligence that he himself had taken advantage of it at the earliest possible moment, and Mr Hastings and I were married, with so much ceremony that everybody was forced to say the Governor-General felt no shame, only pride, in

the match he was making. All the world had thought me cold towards him—the worst that Mr Francis could say of me was that I was marrying the Governor-General and not the man—but I trust Mr Hastings has learnt since that time something of the adoring love and gratitude dat fills his poor Marian's heart for him. Even he could not picture the whole extent of it. If any effort of hers could approach towards repaying him—— Ah, Hessy, Hessy, and at this moment he may be lying dead!" She wept again, but more softly, as though exhausted by her agitation, and after a little while fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A PANIC.

At Mr Law's house at PATNA, *August ye 26th*, 1781.

After the frightful agitations of the evening and the night, we passed a day of calm equally unbroken with those that had gone before it. To my astonishment and relief, the invincible spirit of Mrs Hastings so preserved its mastery that she was pretty well when she rose, though she remained all day in her own apartments, writing letter after letter to the Governor-General, all duplicates of one another, but all in her own hand, as she designed them to be despatched by different routes. Every half-hour she would send me to enquire of Captain Sands whether any cossid[1] was arrived, but although rumours in plenty were coming in from all sides, nothing authoritative transpired. The Indians belonging to the place were met together in groups, talking and gesticulating, eying curiously the approach of any European, but dispersing as he came near, while the servants and others that had accompanied us from Calcutta regarded their fellow-countrymen with the keenest contempt, though they could not but be aware of the cause for their inquietude. Mrs

[1] Messenger.

Hastings maintained her resolution to start for Patna on the morrow, to the alarm of Captain Sands, who confided to me that in the hope of finding her determination changed in the morning, he had delayed sending the hircarra to beg an escort of Colonel Ahmuty, so that the boats could not now arrive until the second evening. This well-meant disobedience was rewarded that night, when the hircarra returned without having reached Patna, but with the news that he had met Sir Elijah Impey coming down the river with his lady and family, and received his commands to return and entreat Mrs Hastings not to quit Monghyr until she had spoken with him. In the course of the next morning we were informed of the approach of the fleet of boats which was conveying the Chief-Justice on his series of visits to the district courts of which he was last year appointed the head, protected by a guard of Seapoys as well as by the crowd of peons and other servants of the Supreme Court who are styled in Calcutta *Impey's Myrmidons*—to select the least ungenteel of the names given them. Captain Sands went down to the Gaut on Mrs Hastings' behalf to welcome the visitors, who landed at once. If I have ever seemed to reflect upon either the goodness of heart or the wisdom of Lady Impey, I desire to recall it now, in view of the unaffected kindness with which she flew to console her afflicted friend, Sir Elijah standing by to offer his sympathy in the heartiest accents of his great voice. Presently Lady Impey retired with Mrs Hastings into her apartment, and Captain Sands and I were left with the Chief-Justice, to whom the Captain communicated hastily our patroness's invincible design of proceeding to Patna, asking his opinion and advice.

"Why, indeed, I hardly know how to advise you," says Sir Elijah. "Patna is in a monstrous sad state—an uncommonly sad state, indeed. Such a set of poltroons as the Europeans there I never saw, and poor old Ahmuty at a loss how to instil any courage into 'em. When we started yesterday, some hero had suggested evacuating the place, and the notion appeared to recommend itself to the rest"

"Good heavens, sir!" cried Captain Sands. "Evacuate Patna, and lose Behar and all the up river stations?"

"That's the notion which was infecting all the Patna gentlemen yesterday. You perceive the situation? The Service gentlemen are crowding after one another like a flock of frightened sheep, and will sweep away Ahmuty's opposition and carry him along with 'em. Such counsel as I could offer had no effect. Now there's just the chance that Mrs Hastings, pleading for her husband, might shame them into a more creditable behaviour. At any rate, ought not the attempt to be made?"

"'Twill questionless be made, if you offer that suggestion to Mrs Hastings, sir," said the Captain.

"On the other hand," proceeded Sir Elijah, like an advocate presenting both sides of a case, "affairs may be as bad as the gentlemen believe. The Seapoys are deserting, the neighbouring zemeendars are sending congratulations to Chyte Sing, the Owd Begums are getting together troops and money for him. Should Mrs Hastings be permitted to incur the risk of visiting Patna—which we may undoubtedly lose at any moment, either by a rising of the inhabitants or a bold dash from without—on the bare chance of supporting her husband if he be still living?"

"But, sir, don't you credit the rumours that he's escaped safe to Chunar?" I cried.

Sir Elijah looked wise. "There's rumours equally persistent that he was killed in endeavouring to escape thither," he said. "Why credit one more than the other?"

"Because the Indians would be less likely to invent that which ran contrary to their wishes, sir."

"Even if they knew it would accord with ours, ma'am? No, I can't take the responsibility of advice. No man could be more desirous than myself to take any rational step by which Mr Hastings, provided he be living, may be extricated from this most disastrous adventure; but I doubt if even his friendship for me would stand the test of my leading his lady into danger. If Mrs Hastings be resolved on going to Patna, Lady Impey and I will attend her thither, and do whatever may be in our power for her assistance; but if she decide to remain here, I shall applaud her prudence."

But since nothing was further from my patroness's mind than

this prudence, one of the black women presently brought a message that Mrs Hastings would be glad to start immediately after the mid day rest, if Sir Elijah would be so good as to give the necessary orders, and Captain Sands hastening to see that the boats were ready, we quitted Monghyr early in the afternoon. Compelled by the swift current and dangerous navigation to halt at sunset, we passed an anxious night on board the vessels, and resuming our voyage as soon as it was light, were promised to reach Patna by noon. Early in the day we saw a budgerow approaching us, with its attendant pulwah and paunchway, from the direction of the city, and the Chief-Justice bade the rowers cease as it came near, lest the persons on board should have any news to give us. The only passenger was an elderly European in loose clothes of white dimity, who reclined under the awning upon a fine carved couch, wearing his night-cap, and smoked his houcca with all the enjoyment in the world. He waved his hand to Sir Elijah with a cheerful air.

"Going back to Patna, sir? I had thought you wiser. There won't a soul be left there to-morrow, save the blackfellows, of course. Mr Law and my brother have called together a council of war, and invited Colonel Ahmuty and the military gentlemen to attend, but there's monstrous little thought of war about any of 'em."

"And pray, sir, why an't you assisting them with your counsel?"

"Because I was too sharp for that, sir. To-morrow there won't be a boat to be had for love or money, and if one got away at all one would be horrid crowded, which is a thing I can't abide. So I say nothing, and slip away in good time, all comfortable, as you see."

"But have you had intelligence of any disaster?"

"Why, no; but if Hastings be alive, we should sure have heard it by now. A clever fellow, but rash, sir — too rash. Hallo! you have two Government House chubdars on board, I see. Who are you taking up?"

"I have the honour of attending Mrs Hastings," says Sir Elijah, very formally.

"You have, eh? Call yourself the Governor-General's friend,

and can't use your lawyer's tongue to keep his lady out of a hornet's nest? Be wise, and turn back."

"Sir," cried Mrs Hastings, putting her head out of the cabin, "if Sir Elijah Impey turned back, I would still go on, though I had no guard but my own servants."

The old gentleman looked solemnly at Sir Elijah as Mrs Hastings withdrew, as though commiserating him in a confidential manner. "A woman of spirit," he said huskily, "and a fine woman—but a cursed shrew, like all that sort!"

He waved his hand a second time, and the boats separated, while I expressed to the Chief-Justice the disgust with which this person's monstrous selfishness inspired me, and asked who he was.

"Why, he's one of the Company's principal servants at Patna, and his brother, on whom he has thus cleverly stole a march, is another. What time was this council of theirs to be held, I wonder? If 'twas early, we are likely enough to encounter fresh fugitives at every turn, but if it was not to meet until the afternoon, we might be in time to concert measures with Ahmuty, who appears to have lost his head."

No more fugitives appearing, we trusted we were still in time, though we wished heartily that Bankypore, where the cantonments are situated, and where Colonel Ahmuty would be found, were placed at the nearer and not at the further extremity of the city. Arrived off the place, all eyes were strained to observe signs of the anticipated exodus, but nothing was perceptible save a number of boats lying off one of the Gauts. On seeing these Sir Elijah chuckled, and begged me to summon Mrs Hastings.

"We shall catch 'em in the act," he said. "That's the Cutchery Gaut, and the boats are questionless those of the officers from Bankypore. They are holding their council in the Court-house, I make no doubt, and I am at Mrs Hastings' service to take part in it, if she so desires."

Mrs Hastings met me at the cabin door, ready dressed for a promenade on shore. "You are ready, Hester?" she asked me. "Captain Sands is waiting, questionless. Bid Sukey attend me with a fan, and Maria with my shawl. Sir Elijah is good enough

to accompany us, but I won't fatigue my kind Lady Impey further, after all her travelling."

It appeared to me that Lady Impey was not sorry to find herself excused, for the indomitable spirit of Mrs Hastings discovers no reflection in her, and I heard her beg her spouse not to run into danger. Sir Elijah put her aside, good-humouredly enough, and handed Mrs Hastings into the landing-boat with all the respect imaginable. Once on the Gaut, we formed a not unimposing procession, the Chief-Justice handing Mrs Hastings and Captain Sands me, the two black women following, the servants holding umbrellas over each couple, and the proper swarry[1] of chubdars and guards preceding and surrounding us. Among the crowd of servants and idlers on the steps of the Court-house we caused no inconsiderable commotion, but the gentlemen within were too deeply absorbed in their debate for the news of our approach to penetrate to them. Even when we entered the apartment we were not at once observed. The council appeared to be divided into two parties, the smaller the military officers, gathered in silence behind Colonel Ahmuty, who was muttering angrily, while the other gentlemen were busy disputing among themselves. The noise of the chubdars' staves was the first thing that moved their attention, and the livery worn by these attendants showed to whose service they belonged. Murmurs of "The Lady Governess!" and "Madam Hastings!" became audible as we advanced into the assembly, and several of the gentlemen rose hurriedly to their feet as Colonel Ahmuty sprang up and came forward.

"Ma'am," he said, in a voice hoarse with emotion, "I wish I had known your intention in time to keep you from honouring with a visit the most monstrous set of cowards that ever disgraced the name of a British community. These—these *gentlemen*—" he shook his fist with inconceivable fury at the disturbed circle, "are resolved to abandon the place and all the Company's interests, and retreat to Calcutta."

"Dear sir, sure you must have misread deir design," replied Mrs Hastings, with the gentlest air in the world, "or I should blush for the race to which my husband belongs. Sure he can

[1] *Sowari*, retinue.

be no Briton that would contemplate abandoning Mr Hastings at this tremendous moment, when the British empire in India depends upon his person."

"Pray, ma'am," says very sharply an elderly gentleman, in whom I made sure that I recognised the brother of our acquaintance of the morning, "before you talk so brave about abandoning Mr Hastings, tell us what was the latest intelligence you had of him?"

"The letter was wrote on the 17th—Friday last—from Mahdew Doss's garden, after the revolt had occurred, but it contained not the slightest hint of despair, or even apprehension."

"Friday last! and we are credibly informed that on Tuesday night he attempted to escape to Chunargur, and was slain in doing it."

"I have heard nothing of it," said Mrs Hastings faintly.

"Then I don't bear malice for your hard words, ma'am; but I'm sorry to tell you that Mr Hastings' head and right hand are suspended from the gateway of Chyte Sing's fortress of Bidgeygur.[1] My servants have talked with the man who has seen it."

The officers all cried out with indignation, and I thought Mrs Hastings would have swooned. For the moment she could not speak, but on a sudden Sir Elijah clasped her hand in a reassuring style.

"Keep up your heart, ma'am!" he cried. "As for you, sir, you'll oblige us by producing your informant, who is a wonder in nature, since he must have flown hither with his news. Bidgeygur is beyond Bennaris, which is itself four days from here, and you tell us that while the catastrophe only took place on Tuesday night, the melancholy trophies could be carried there and displayed so as to be seen by this fellow, and the news brought hither by him, all by Friday night!"

"'Tis universally credited by the people and the Seapoys," was the sullen reply, but Mrs Hastings had regained her powers.

"Whether Mr Hastings be living or not, gentlemen, will you bring yourselves to cut off all hope of safety from the garrisons up the river? Colonel Blair, Colonel Morgan, Sir John Cum-

[1] Bijaigarh.

mings, Colonel Hannay—all these officers with their commands depend upon you."

"Why, ma'am, they must look after themselves. They take the risk they're paid for."

"Now I know that the race that abandoned Mr Holwell in Calcutta an't yet extinct!" cried Mrs Hastings passionately.

"Pray, ma'am, does your ladyship encourage us to remain by promising us a second Black Hole?"

"No, sir—" Mrs Hastings' voice was extraordinary calm—"but a second Patna Massacre—outside Patna—if you depart. Pray, Colonel Ahmuty, an't I right in supposing that you decline to weaken your force by furnishing guards for any boat descending the river at present?"

"You are, ma'am. I won't part with a single Seapoy!" cried the Colonel, with a tremendous oath, which passed unreproved in the perturbation of the moment.

"And an't it also the case—Colonel Ahmuty will correct me if I am wrong—that all the boats are seized by the military—both those in private hands and dose for hire?"

"Ma'am, your thoughts jump with mine to a miracle!" and Colonel Ahmuty threw a ferocious glance to an aid-du-camp, who slipped out in an unobtrusive manner.

"You see, gentlemen," Mrs Hastings turned again to the discomfited advocates of retreat, "Colonel Ahmuty an't willing to have this settlement disgraced with such scenes as accompanied de capture of Calcutta. If he find it necessary, for military reasons, to despatch the civil population down the river, he won't permit the rich to depart with five or six half-empty boats, while the poor are abandoned helpless on the Gauts. Each household will be allotted its proportionate share of accommodation, and thus not only will all be conveyed in safety, but a much less number of guards will be required."

The gentleman to whom this was principally addressed was incapacitated from replying, either by astonishment or disgust, though those behind him were indulging in loud murmurs, and Mrs Hastings continued, with an air of the most complete unconcern,

"Had you, gentlemen, permitted Colonel Ahmuty to lay

before you his schemes for the defence of the city, instead of seeking to urge upon him a course totally opposed to his duty, you'd have found your safety and dat of your households perfectly provided for. In the Kella you have in your very midst a place of safety, easy of access from all parts of the settlement at all hours of the day and night. 'Twould be possible to accommodate all the European population there at once; but in view of the discomfort and risk attendant at this season upon crowding, I understand the Colonel would recommend your remaining at your own houses until you receive the warning he pledges himself to administer at the first approach of danger."

Colonel Ahmuty nodded vehemently, though to the accompaniment of fresh murmurs, and Mrs Hastings spoke quickly,

"I had intended to ask the Colonel's hospitality at Bankypore, but finding his plans for the protection of the city so complete, I am tempted to take advantage of them myself. Pray, sir," she addressed herself to her principal antagonist, "will your lady accord to the Governor-General's wife the shelter of her roof for the few days that must elapse before she can prosecute her journey to Bennaris?"

"Upon my soul, ma'am, no!" cried the cowardly wretch, in a great shout. "If the army gentlemen chuse to accommodate you, let 'em, since you appear to have took command of the force; but as for lodging you in Patna, where the rumour of your presence would bring down upon us every leader of robbers between this and Dhely, hoping to hold you to ransom—why, ma'am, we an't such fools!"

Instantly there arose a great clamour among the officers, which Colonel Ahmuty, himself almost speechless with indignation, could not restrain, desiring to turn the gentleman and his household out of their abode by force, and establish Mrs Hastings there, but she, with all the amiability in the world, entreated them to desist.

"I am not used to offer a visit where it an't welcome," she said, "and if this generous warmth of yours continue, gentlemen, I shall be forced to conclude myself undesired at Bankypore also. But that I should be reluctant indeed to believe. That

her presence is dangerous to them will, I know, be an additional inducement—if such were needed—for the officers of the Bengal Army to welcome among them the wife of Mr Hastings."

The fervour of the officers over this graceful compliment knew no bounds. With a generous unanimity they called for cheers for the Governor-General and his lady, and drawing their swords, prepared to attend Mrs Hastings from the apartment. But Mr Law, the chief of the factory, having in a measure recovered his courage from her example, interposed to claim the honour of lodging her at his own residence, observing, neatly enough, that her presence would be worth a troop of horse to the defenders of the town. This the officers were brought to allow, but they could not be restrained from escorting her, bare-headed, as far as the Gaut. Colonel Ahmuty, who handed me, could not conceal his admiration.

"What a woman! what a woman!" he repeated again and again. "I had never believed any country could produce so splendid a creature. Sure she's the glory of her sex! Governor-General, pho! Mr Hastings should be Emperor of Dhely with such a woman at his side. Never in all my existence have I seen one to approach her."

"Oh, pray, sir!" said I, wickedly, I fear, "what about Mrs Ahmuty?"

"Oh, well—why, indeed, my dear ma'am, I haven't a word to say against Mrs Ahmuty, who's an excellent good woman, and uncommonly superior to your humble servant. But 'tis the way of it, my dear ma'am—the way of it! Did you observe how prettily Mrs Hastings spoke? 'An't I right in supposing, Colonel Ahmuty——?' 'Colonel Ahmuty, you'll correct me if I'm wrong.' Now with Mrs Ahmuty, good soul, 'twould have been, 'Ahmuty, you'll refuse to supply guards,' 'Ahmuty, you old fool, why han't you seized the boats?' and so on. But I tell you, ma'am, I believe, on my soul and conscience, that Mrs Hastings has saved Patna to-day for the Company, and not only Patna, but the whole province of Behar. As I've heard Mr Hastings say, there's no place like India for supporting a rising cause or depressing a falling one, and so sure as the civil gentlemen had forsook the place, every blackfellow on this side

of the Carrumnassa had turned against us. 'Tis bad enough as things are. We have advices from Muxadavad that the Seapoys are becoming insubordinate even down there—though how ever they learned of the disasters the devil alone knows—and at Lucnow Mr Middleton and Colonel Martin[1] have been forced to fortify their quarters and plant cannon in readiness to repel an assault. And there's those old harridans at Fyzabad—I ask your pardon for speaking so of any female, black though she be—the Owd Begums, I would say, are calling in money and enrolling their Nudgies[2] to send to Chyte Sing—all thinking that our Eckball has failed us at last!"

"Do you—do you believe Mr Hastings is dead, sir?"

"Why, ma'am, I don't know. I did believe it, but if his lady says he an't, why, I'll swear he an't to my dying day!"

PATNA, *Sept. ye 3rd.*

The confidence of my patroness in her husband and his cause is gloriously justified by the receipt of no fewer than three letters wrote with his own hand from Chunargur, and a sufficiency of intelligence through other channels. Mr Hastings' three billets are all very brief, having been sent, like that from Mahdew Doss's garden, concealed in quills, the first dated on August 22nd, in the early morning of which day he reached the fortress, the others on the 26th and 27th. They all breathe the same spirit of unqualified cheerfulness, displaying not the least anxiety in the world for the writer's own safety, but much for that of Mrs Hastings, whom he desires repeatedly to return at once to Boglepore, or even to Calcutta, so as to be out of danger. This wish of her husband's Mrs Hastings is resolved to disregard for the present, knowing him, as she says, sufficiently well to venture to employ her own judgment when he is ignorant of the circumstances, since he can't be aware of the importance of her presence in Patna at this juncture.

The melancholy history of the Bennaris revolt is now gradually becoming clear, and proving the inconceivable carelessness and temerity which played into the hands of the disaffected Raja and overturned the plans of Mr Hastings. Chyte Sing returning

[1] The founder of the Martiniere.

[2] Najibs.

a supercilious and evasive answer to the demand for explanations addressed to him, the Governor-General ordered Mr Markham to proceed with two companies of Seapoys to his residence at Chevala Gaut[1] and place him under arrest. This being done, the Raja submitted quietly, sending back by Mr Markham a deprecatory letter, and following it immediately by another, couched in such pathetic terms that Mr Hastings despatched a written assurance of his merciful intentions to tranquillise the captive's mind. While Mr Markham was preparing to resume the charge of him, however, word arrived that large bodies of armed men had crossed the river from the fortress of Ramnugger, and proceeded to the Raja's house. Fearing some attempt at rescue, Mr Hastings sent off one of the Raja's Vackeels whom he had with him, attended by Mr Markham's chubdar, to warn the prince to offer no violence to the Seapoys left to guard him. When they arrived, the place was already in a tumult, which was in no way composed by the terms in which the chubdar delivered his message, adding to it various impertinences of his own, natural to be addressed by a Brahmin to a captive of low *cast*. The two companies of Seapoys were stationed in an enclosed square surrounding the house, and were now themselves blockaded on all sides by Chyte Sing's warriors from Ramnugger, who began to fire upon them, though whether before or after the arrival of the chubdar does not appear. By some monstrous oversight, or out of a mistaken notion of complimenting the Raja, the Seapoys had been sent without any ammunition, and when Major Popham, discovering the fact, despatched a third company to reinforce and supply them, the house was already surrounded. Wanting their accustomed means of defence, the unfortunate Seapoys fell an easy sacrifice, though the three young European officers offered an astonishing resistance, involving in their fate a much superior number of their assailants. Their bodies were found lying within a short distance of one another, shockingly mangled, when the third company of Seapoys fought their way into the house and cleared it of the Raja's people. The Raja himself had taken advantage of the confusion to make his escape into a boat by

[1] Shiwala Ghat.

means of a rope of turbands tied together, from the wicket leading to the river, and his troops crowded after him in the same tumultuous manner in which they had assembled. Reaching Ramnugger, his fears would not allow him to remain there, but in the night he fled with his brother to the strong fortress of Lutteefpoor, near Chunar.

Immediately on hearing of the tumult at Chevala Gaut, Mr Hastings had directed Major Popham to repair at once to his camp and march with every available Seapoy to the support of the three companies first sent, but though he obeyed with the utmost expedition, he arrived too late. The serious posture of affairs was apparent to all the Governor-General's circle, but with the most extreme coolness Mr Hastings ordered the promulgation of perwannahs announcing the forfeiture by Chyte Sing of his zemeendarry, and the appointment of a Niab or deputy to administer the government for the present. Not until this was done did he order up to his support a battalion of Seapoys from Chunar, a regiment from Dynapoor, and the remainder of Major Popham's force from Merzapoor. Once again an unpardonable error jeopardised the entire plan of the Governor-General, for Captain Mayaffre, in command of the Merzapoor detachment, on meeting that from Chunar, assumed the command, and disregarding his orders, which were to await Major Popham's arrival before making any attempt on Ramnugger, determined on assaulting that fortress himself. Marching precipitately into the narrow lanes of the town, he was fired upon from every window, and fell in an instant, with nearly all his Europeans and a large number of Seapoys. Captain Blair, the junior officer who had commanded the party from Chunar, succeeded in extricating the remains of the force in a very able manner, and returned thither with the loss of two guns and a howitz, and one hundred killed.

This disaster occurred on August 20th, when Mr Hastings, hopeful of finding himself shortly in a position to take the field, had been sending out multiplied copies of his orders to the various military stations for reinforcements, and to Mr Middleton, the Resident at the Nabob-Vizier's court at Lucnow, for a provision of money. The rashness of Captain Mayaffre and

its deplorable consequences rendered his situation in Mahdew Doss's garden suddenly desperate. The place stands in the midst of the suburbs of Bennaris, and comprises many detached buildings, surrounded with trees, in one large enclosure, so that the thirty Europeans who had accompanied the Governor-General, and the four hundred Seapoys remaining from the various detachments, were totally incompetent for its defence. Mr Hastings consulted Major Popham and the other officers, persons whose courage was undoubted, and received from each the same advice—namely, to retreat to Chunar. This recommendation, so absolutely opposed to his temper, he resisted for two whole days, urging the disgrace of such a retirement, and the impossibility of abandoning the wounded. An opportunity offering, however, of entrusting these unfortunates to the care of Sadit Ally Cawn, cousin to the Nabob-Vizier, who sent to offer to join the Governor-General, with a force of a thousand men, and an attack by boats threatening from Ramnugger, Mr Hastings yielded.

Between seven and eight in the evening of the 21st orders were issued for the troops to march by different roads, so as to move with all possible speed, and gain the open country before an attack could be made on them in the suburbs. Another route was appointed for the great crowd of servants, with the palenqueens and heavy baggage, lest the troops should be obstructed in their march, and the evacuation took place with all the order and secrecy possible. About nine o'clock Mr Hastings, who was marching on foot with the troops, discerned the approach of a battalion of Seapoys, who proved to have been sent from Chunar in haste on the arrival of the defeated column and the receipt of the Governor-General's reiterated orders; but since it was now too late to return to Bennaris, even with this accession of force, all proceeded to Chunar. The other gentlemen and the remainder of the Seapoys all joined Mr Hastings safely, but a vexatious misfortune befell them in the loss of the whole of the baggage, the servants taking a wrong road, and falling into the hands of the enemy. Mr Hodges was so fortunate as to save his sketches and a few changes of linen, but Mr Hastings was forced to be indebted to the kindness of

one of the officers' ladies at Chunar, a distant relative of his own, for the contents of her absent spouse's wardrobe. But these trifling disasters fade into insignificance when the extraordinary fact is considered, that the whole party quitted the hostile town not only without loss, but without opposition, and, marching an entire hot night in the rains, reached safety without perceiving the slightest ill effect.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A TRIUMPH.

BOGLEPORE, *Sept. ye 20th*, 1781.

With the utmost reluctance on the part of my patroness we have quitted Patna, and returned to this peaceful spot, driven, as she complains, by the reproachful, the entreating, the imperious letters of Mr Hastings, who would prefer to know us at Calcutta, or at least at Muxadavad. The source of his anxiety is that of the Patna gentlemen, namely, the fear lest Chyte Sing, foiled in his desire to possess himself of the person of the Governor-General, should, by a last effort of despair, attempt to secure that of Mrs Hastings. To add a further two days to the distance separating her from Chunar was inconceivably painful to my beloved patroness, and her complacency sprang only from the affecting assurance contained in almost every letter of her husband, that fear for her safety was the sole anxiety afflicting him. This enforced compliance, preying upon her spirits, has induced in her a degree of impatience that I fear may have seemed harshness in the case of poor Mrs Sulivan. This unfortunate young lady appears unable to act but in a style offensive to Mrs Hastings. Did our patroness desire repose, Mrs Sulivan became loquacious; was her mind a little tranquillised, Mrs Sulivan was full of tears and forebodings; did a letter arrive, or Colonel Ahmuty make a visit, Mrs Sulivan must thrust herself

forward to demand news of her husband. Yet I ventured a remonstrance when Mrs Hastings ordered our return hither without so much as informing Mrs Sulivan of her intention, but in vain. It fell to good Mrs Motte to communicate to the young lady that she was to be left at Mr Law's, plunging her into a sad state of mind, but our patroness was inflexible, and when Mrs Sulivan wrote desiring to rejoin her, she sent a peremptory letter to forbid it. I know well the sentiment of repulsion that afflicts one with regard to certain persons or things, but I have always considered Mrs Hastings to be above such weaknesses. She is, indeed, far superior to them, I am convinced. 'Tis the anxious and dangerous posture of affairs that has disturbed the equanimity of her disposition, and we may trust soon to behold her restored to her accustomed tranquillity.

Before she quitted Patna she had seen despatched to Mr Hastings' support Major Crawford and his regiment of cavalry, and was satisfied that Colonel Ahmuty was master of the situation in that city. That the terrors of the European inhabitants are in no way abated was proved by a ludicrous scene near a week ago. False alarms of the approach of an enemy having been of frequent occurrence, the minds of all were in a high state of apprehension, which increased to a panic on the night of the 11th, when a village in the vicinity, visible from the walls, had the misfortune to be accidentally set on fire. Almost before the horrified spectators had determined that the army of Chyte Sing was approaching, laying waste the country before it, after the example of Hyder Ally, a tumult close at hand convinced them that its arrival had been anticipated by conspirators in the city itself. The actual cause of the disturbance was a Gentoo marriage procession, which was passing through the streets with the customary pomp of torches, drums and other musical instruments, shouting and vast crowds, but the Europeans believed they beheld a mob marching upon them and thirsting for their destruction. With the utmost precipitancy the entire white population crowded into the Kella, the ladies in every description of undress. the gentlemen in their night-clothes, and there remained until the morning liberated them from their terrors by displaying the groundless nature of the alarm. They were

further cheered by receiving certain intelligence of the successes of our troops in the neighbourhood of Chunar, of which only vague rumours had hitherto reached them, the Raja having been driven out of his fortress of Seeker,[1] whither he had proceeded with the intention of attacking Mr Hastings, his new quarters at Pateeta also being assailed, and all his cannon and ammunition captured or destroyed.

This pleasing turn in our affairs, after so many misfortunes, serves to exhibit the more clearly that greatness of mind which distinguishes Mr Hastings, and endears him to all persons of worth. Nothing more gratifying has ever been witnessed, as his lady acknowledges with joyful tears, than the affectionate ardour with which the military at every station have hastened to his support on hearing of the danger to which he was exposed. Although his letters to Colonel Morgan at Khaunpoor all failed to reach their destination, yet that officer, on hearing the news by common report, embarked every man he could spare and despatched them to his assistance, and the other commanders were in no way behind. So prompt and abundant were their reinforcements, indeed, as to threaten Mr Hastings with a cruel embarrassment, for he was totally destitute of money, and in the uncertain posture of his affairs, could obtain no credit, even for the purchase of provisions. The entire force of Seapoys was already from four to six months in arrears of pay, and all the efforts of Colonel Blair could not extort from the shroffs of Chunar, who were grown rich under his protection, more than 2500 rupees, which were distributed among the troops for the supply of their immediate necessities. Some relief was obtained by a welcome capture of grain in the attack on Pateeta, and the Lucnow reinforcement was to bring with it one and a half lacks, which would pay off a portion of the Seapoys' arrears, but indeed, at the moment when Mr Hastings reached Chunar, his situation was such as to depress the stoutest heart.

For some days every dauck brought intelligence of fresh disasters, a full half of Owd showing itself equally rebellious with Bennaris, the chief Futty Shaw,[2] who alone condescended to an alliance with Chyte Sing, invading Behar, the zemeendars

[1] Sikr. [2] Fatih Shah.

of that province either maintaining a sullen reserve or openly raising levies for his assistance, and the government of Nepaul taking the opportunity of our troubles to seize a portion of territory that had long been in dispute. Yet in the midst of these misfortunes, and unblessed with the knowledge of that firmness and intrepidity on his lady's part which had prevented the abandonment of Behar, Mr Hastings exhibited the utmost coolness. On three separate occasions, whether out of a fear of proceeding to extremities, or a hope of attaining his desires without further appeal to arms, did the rebellious Chyte Sing indite a letter containing indefinite professions of fidelity and a slight expression of concern for his past behaviour, but no answer was returned to any of them, the Governor-General not holding it consistent with his dignity to admit any overture from a rebel in arms. More than this, the Nabob-Vizier, who was already on his way to meet Mr Hastings, was civilly requested to return to Lucnow, lest he should believe his support indispensable, or even material, to the maintenance of British power, valuable as his army might have been. Obeying the request to dispense with his troops, the prince declared himself unable to submit to the mortification of losing the interview he had been promised, and came on with a small guard. He received a warm welcome from Mr Hastings, who, disregarding the innumerable hints of treachery which had reached him, paid him the first visit, thus attaching him to himself with all the affection of which the young ruler's slight and shallow disposition is capable.

Infinite as is the veneration and esteem I have always cherished for this great man, the events of the past month have contributed to raise it to a pitch almost approaching idolatry. Through all the agitating and momentous events he has witnessed, his letters have remained cheerful, almost playful in tone, as when he congratulates himself on discovering, by the vicissitudes he has passed through, that he possesses a mind capable of accommodating itself to any the most disagreeable situation. To hear them, you would say that he had undergone nothing but the most trivial and agreeable experiences. The climate of Chunar is that of Paradise, the small force at hand is superior to the enemy's entire strength, the Nabob-Vizier has be-

haved nobly, and betrayed a nice appreciation of his patron's true sentiments by his respectful inquiries for Mrs Hastings. Beneram Pundit, the Berar Vackeel, has displayed an uncommon attachment, even pressing upon Mr Hastings a lack of rupees, the whole support of his family, Mr Sulivan is in such health and laughing spirits as to keep all the party merry. All this is told with such simple candour, such an unfeigned belief that Mrs Hastings will rejoice in every evidence of affection for her husband's person and of the confidence he inspires, that I can never cease to be grateful for the injunction contained in the letters, that they are to be read to Sir Elijah and Lady Impey, since I am thus allowed a share in the pleasure.

Boglepore, *Oct. ye* 1*st.*

We are still at this place, residing in the mansion of the amiable Mr Cleveland as his guests, our situation fixed by the opposing wishes of Mr and Mrs Hastings, he desiring his lady either to cross the river, or at least to retire some distance below Boglepore, for her more complete safety, and she resolved at the earliest possible moment to join him at Bennaris itself. So happy have been the events of the last fortnight that Mr Hastings now regards our disasters as completely retrieved, and purposes returning immediately to his old quarters at Mahdew Doss's garden, where he has sent Sir Elijah an urgent invitation to join him, which the Chief-Justice only delays doing until he receive intelligence of his friend's arrival there.

His small force strengthened by the reinforcement sent by Colonel Morgan from Khaunpoor and that brought by Major Roberts from Lucnow, Major Popham took the field in the middle of last month. Dividing his still meagre army into two parts, he despatched one, under the command of Major Crabb, against the fortress of Lutteefpoor, where Chyte Sing had taken refuge, having again made overtures for peace in vain. This detachment, marching by an almost impracticable route, where the Seapoys were forced to lift the guns up the rocks because the bullocks could not draw them, seized the heights above Lutteefpoor and defeated a considerable body of the enemy, with the result that the fortress was found evacuated the next

morning. On the same evening Major Popham himself stormed and captured Pateeta, his success contributing to the evacuation of Lutteefpoor, from which Chyte Sing fled by a circuitous route, Major Crabb's force commanding the direct road, to his final stronghold of Bidgeygur, which is situated upon a rock some fifty miles to the south-east of Chunar. Such was the consternation produced among his followers by these events, that the forts of Ramnugger and Sutteesgur have also been abandoned, leaving the Raja in possession of Bidgeygur alone.

Our sojourn here has been cheered by the arrival of the Chief-Justice's daucks, which are very frequent, his lady desiring constant intelligence of her two fine children, Master Elijah and the lovely little Marian, Mrs Hastings' god-daughter, who are left in the care of friends at Calcutta. Together with the accounts of their health and progress has come a whole quantity of public and private news of which we were ignorant, the Governor-General's daucks having all gone on to Buxar, to be forwarded thence to Chunar when the means offer. The intelligence of greatest moment to myself is that of the battle fought at Porto Novo, on the Carnatic Coast, so long ago as the 1st of July, when Sir Eyre Coote, by a happy combination of intrepidity and skill, succeeded with eight thousand men in defeating Hyder's army, variously estimated at from sixty five to a hundred thousand seasoned troops. I have had the happiness to receive an account of this victory from the pen of my dear Maxwell, who considers no pains too great that may allay my anxiety or even gratify my impatience, but whose strongest endeavours could not succeed in conveying to me so much as the assurance of his own safety in a less period than three entire months. Alas! it is already near a whole year since I bade him farewell, and this war, to all appearance, is but just begun. The army which Mr Hastings strained every resource, and beggared his own government, to provide, has only once succeeded in bringing to an action the vastly superior forces of the enemy. Backwards and forwards, hither and thither, now relieving a besieged fortress, now repulsed from a fortified pagoda, again forced to turn inland by the appearance on the coast of a French fleet, does the indomitable veteran lead his meagre

force, always at the last extremity for want of provisions, cattle and forage. What hope is there of a victorious issue? I can perceive that Maxwell sees little, though he writes confidently of holding out and giving the Mysoreans no peace until Mr Hastings sends fresh reinforcements or turns the Marattas against them, but he knows nothing as yet of the recent dangerous turn in our affairs here. He has filled my heart with terror by mentioning that Hyder has challenged Sir Eyre Coote to confront him on the anniversay of Colonel Baillie's frightful disaster at the very scene of it, the village of Pollilore, time and place offering, according to the Moorish superstition, the most hopeful omens for the victor in the former battle. Such a challenge is not likely to be refused by our gallant General, and thus another engagement may—nay, must—have occurred before this, with what result we can't hear for two or three months. I am in an agony for Maxwell's safety, my limbs tremble, my heart fails me—but I must be calm, for Mrs Hastings may demand my attendance at any moment. I will seek composure in setting down what seemed to me some very just remarks that fell yesterday from the lips of the Chief-Justice on the subject of Mr Hastings.

We were seated in the varendar after tea, when Mrs Motte read aloud to us various passages from the newspapers which have been sent up, among them one from *The Bengal Gazette*, with which her spouse mentioned that all Calcutta had been vastly delighted, containing the rapturous declaration that Sir Eyre Coote had behaved more like an Angel than a Man at the battle of Porto Novo. Someone remarking upon the shrewdness of Mr Hickey, who, finding himself no longer in a situation to praise Mess. Francis and Wheler in contrast with Mr Hastings, owing to the conversion of the one and the departure of the other, has taken to belaud the General with the most laboured compliments, in order to vilify Mr Hastings by comparison, Sir Elijah acquainted us that this vivacious though troublesome person has of late carried on the business of his paper from the Calcutta Jail. In the anxiety of mind engendered first by Mrs Hastings' illness and then by the recent troubles, I did not know, or if I heard, did not heed, that the long series of gross

libels published by Mr Hickey against Mr Hastings and the venerable Padra Kiernander had at length been resented by an action in the courts. Found guilty, the enterprising printer was committed to prison in the hope that he would learn wisdom from the fright and a brief period of incarceration, Mr Hastings showing an extreme reluctance to proceed to extremities in a dispute with the press, warned by the ill success of Administration in similar controversies at home.

"I trust the fellow has learnt his lesson, sir, and moderated his tongue?" says Mr Cleveland.

"Why, of that you may judge from the more recent extracts with which Mrs Motte has favoured us," said Sir Elijah. "The fellow is incorrigible, and so I told Mr Hastings, but in deference to his wishes I have recommended a moderate sentence. Had the affair been left to me, I would have joined with the Council to suppress the paper and deport Hickey. Indulgence shown to such a man is merely misunderstood."

"It an't Sir Elijah Impey's custom to find fault with Mr Hastings in the presence of his wife," said Mrs Hastings mildly.

"Why, no, ma'am, I'll confess that I more often find fault with him to his face. When I see a man's a fool, I don't boggle over telling him so. But I'm in hopes of engaging your advice to reinforce mine in the future. If you'll pardon my saying it, I've known Hastings a good many more years than you have, and I find him now precisely what he was when we were both Westminsters."

"Pray, sir, how so?" asked Mrs Motte.

"Why, ma'am, he was just the placable creature he is now, ready to endure so much for peace' sake that his enemies never divined the resolution that lay behind his mild exterior. It wan't until they had tormented him beyond all bounds that they discovered a stout heart and a heavy fist in the youth who appeared equally incapable of self-assertion and self-defence. His chosen associates were those few among our school-fellows who cultivated, even at that young age, a taste for the humaner arts—for which I can't pretend I had much liking myself. Such pleasure as he took in my company sprang from the service I was able to do him once or twice in a fight, but the society

he really affected was that of such lads as poor Billy Cowper, some relative of my Lord Cowper's, but a sad unhappy creature that was led a dog's life for his timidity and love of his books. Billy was a year older, and a monstrous deal bigger, but he regarded Hastings as his champion and best friend."

"Pray, sir," said I, "is this the Mr Cowper who has wrote some pretty poems? I have seen them among the pamphlets in Mr Hastings' library, but I had not guessed he knew the writer."

"I don't know anything about him now, ma'am. These things an't in my line."

"La, Sir Elijah!" cried his lady. "You would make any person of taste think us a set of Goths. I'm sure I've heard several people mention the gentleman as a very ingenious person."

"Well, my dear, I leave poetry and romances to you. I'll own that poor Billy was the kind of lad that might well turn out a poet, if that'll gratify you. But it's that very taste of Hastings' for polite and elegant pursuits, and his friendship with persons more distinguished for their virtues than their abilities, that assists to deceive his assailants. They find it incredible that one so domestic in his recreations, so yielding even in his public character, should not endure even the very last extremity of opposition. But that he won't do, and it's a testimony to their foolishness that they can never perceive when they are driving him too far. Speaking roughly, one may say there's two points on which he is adamant—the British dominion in India, and the respect due to Mrs Hastings. On this last, Mr Hickey would questionless agree with me."

"Indeed," says Mrs Hastings, with considerable vivacity, "I'll confess I have thought Mr Hastings very forbearing in that respect. Pray, sir, do you remember that the wretch Hickey ventured to say, in a silly satire imitating a description of Japan, that I was 'stuck up with all the costly appendages of Eastern luxury'? No notice was taken of that."

"Perhaps Mr Hastings considered it a fair criticism, ma'am," says the Chief-Justice slyly. "Sure I had thought a lady who, if wearing but a simple muslin, so decorates it with trimmings

and accompanies it with jewels as to make every other female in the apartment appear under-dressed beside her, would have been the last to resent the phrase."

"Oh, sir," cried Mrs Motte, "you mistake. Had it dealt with the taste displayed in the devising her gowns, Mrs Hastings had indeed been complimented, but not when it referred to the mere assemblage of ornaments, such as uninstructed wealth may provide."

"And there's other ladies possess as fine jewels as Mrs Hastings, though they mayn't wear 'em all at the same time," muttered Lady Impey, with so discontented an air that her spouse resumed his topic with a certain degree of haste.

"As I was saying, on the question of the maintenance of our empire, Mr Hastings will never give way. I can't but laugh when I think of Mr Francis proclaiming him to his own party as a timid, desperate, distracted being, incapable of any action unless anticipated and supported by a firm and resolute associate, while Mr Hastings, his eyes fixed upon the goal of the public safety and honour, was conceding detail after detail of his most cherished schemes, in the hope of securing the main point. Such a stupid patience, as he styled it, such a considered humility, was so foreign to the calculates of Mr Francis that he could not even recognise it when he saw it, and thinking to capture the citadel, the outworks of which had been contemptuously abandoned to him, he met with his final repulse. It has been the same with Chyte Sing, who refused to secure his safety by a prompt submission while there was time, and sought in vain to avert his deserved punishment by alternate defiance, bribes and protestations. These men have failed to perceive that there's a point beyond which even Mr Hastings won't permit himself to be defied, and as companions in their mistake they may now number the Princesses of Owd, since those ladies have also reached the limit."

"I rejoice to hear you say it, sir!" cried Mr Cleveland. "Their assistance to Chyte Sing is so notorious that the worst possible impression would be created did they escape punishment."

"Ah," says Sir Elijah, "the Begums knew not when they

were well off. Their ill-gotten gains were secured to them by the guarantee of the Council, which Mr Hastings would never have raised a finger to break, though 'twas passed in his despite, and he knew it to be both unjust and dangerous. I can conceive that he would have made the ladies a visit at Fyzabad, and have employed all his eloquence in seeking to arouse them through the curtain to a sense of their duty towards the unhappy Azoph-ool-Dowlah, but from any attempt at coercion they were safe, so long as they maintained an attitude of decency towards the government on whose guarantee they relied for protection. But to turn against us at the moment of greatest danger to our rule, to contribute in men and cash to the rebellion of Chyte Sing, to attack our officers stationed in their districts and slay our Seapoys—such crimes as these release us from any shadow of necessity to maintain them in possession either of their jaghires or of the stolen treasure."

"The ladies won't be reduced to poverty, I trust, sir?" said I.

"Why, no, ma'am. In exchange for their jaghires they'll receive the value of their rents yearly, paid in money, and I don't doubt a considerable portion of the treasure will still stick to their fingers. But enough ought to be recovered to enable the Nabob-Vizier to satisfy his debt to the Company, and set his principality in order."

"What a cry would the transaction offer to Mr Francis, were he here!" says Captain Sands. "He need but suppress the compensation offered, and the misdeeds of the Begums, and here's Mr Hastings extorting vast sums from the feeble hands of two defenceless old women of exalted rank!"

"Sir, those old women have very near been Mr Hastings' destruction," said Sir Elijah. "But that same thought occurred to me, and knowing the disposition of our people at home, I have suggested to him to safeguard himself by obtaining affidavits, in strict legal form, on every point of the Begums' misconduct."

"Oh, pray, sir, is this necessary?" cried Mr Cleveland. "The thing is so well known, so incapable even of extenuation, that nobody could utter a word against the infliction even of

severe punishment, much less a forced restitution of stolen goods."

"My dear sir, things which are matters of common notoriety here, and equally undoubted with the sun above us, may bear a very different complexion in England. Nothing but such evidence as would satisfy a criminal court will pass there, and that's my reason for advising Mr Hastings to obtain it. There's nothing your true Briton so much dislikes as action taken upon a mere presumption of guilt, so that my visits to Bennaris and Lucnow will be occupied in proving there's no danger of that in this case."

"Indeed, sir, I wonder you were able to induce Mr Hastings to consent to your reasonable suggestion," says Mrs Hastings.

"Why, ma'am, I begin to think he is learning wisdom at last. 'Tis the fault I have always had to find with him, that he expects the best from everybody, and looks to be judged with candour even by his enemies. Then his agents fail him or abuse his confidence, his antagonists ascribe to him the most monstrous motives, and he is equally miserable and astonished as if it had never happened before. He looks for good in every human creature, and often fails to find it, while Mr Francis confidently expected evil from the same persons, and was generally gratified."

"And Sir Elijah Impey?" asked Mrs Motte.

"Sir Elijah Impey, ma'am, takes the world as he finds it. If he find good, he experiences a glow of satisfaction, if evil, he an't much surprised. Put it that the military gentlemen, whose services and devotion Mr Hastings has so justly eulogized, were to disappoint their benefactor—no offence to you, captain—I should experience regret, but not astonishment. Mr Francis would be astonished if they didn't—there's the difference."

"Sir," said Mrs Hastings, compassionating the mortification of Captain Sands, who knew not how to rebut an accusation so improbable and so vaguely worded, "at least you'll allow that the gentlemen of the army merit the most unstinted praise for the loyalty with which they flew to Mr Hastings' rescue, and the zeal with which they have effected his re-establishment at Bennaris?"

"Why, yes, ma'am. No man could admire 'em more than I do. But because a person's a hero, I don't expect him to be free from every the most trifling fault, and therefore my confidence in the human race wouldn't be shaken by a few little accidents, such as would cause Mr Hastings the most poignant grief."

To hint such ingratitude against the profession which Maxwell adorns! I can't say I have any longer that esteem for Sir Elijah which I should wish to entertain for a person in his respectable situation

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CHAPTER XXV.

A DISAPPOINTMENT.

At Mahdew Doss's Garden, BENNARIS, *Oct. ye 29th*, 1781.

Mrs Hastings has at length attained her desire of joining her husband at this place, which is now as safe as any portion of our own dominions, though Mr Hastings' permission for her journey was gained only with difficulty, and under the condition that the slightest indisposition on her part should revoke it. Resolved to prove to him that she was better than for many months past, my patroness allowed Captain Sands the honour of attending her out an airing before breakfast each day before we left Boglepore, adducing this revolution in her habits in a triumphant vindication of her claim to health. Quitting Mr Cleveland's hospitable roof on the 9th of this month, we embarked on a tedious voyage, since the river was low, and the winds generally contrary. Obtaining an additional escort at Patna from Colonel Ahmuty, we parted at Buxar from Captain Sands, who was returning by land with the *dauckwallers* to Calcutta, where his lady, who was near her time, urgently desired his presence, which Mr Hastings had granted. At Buxar we were received by the Governor-General himself, whose meeting with his lady was the most affecting scene imaginable, and

so proceeded with all the pomp in the world to Bennaris, where Mr Markham, in welcoming Mrs Hastings to the city, gallantly acquainted her that the Gaut where she landed would in future bear her name. This delicate compliment caused the keenest pleasure to Mr Hastings, who could not restrain his joy even when we had traversed the city and were arrived at our quarters.

"These young rogues know how to ensure my favour," he said, "and so do the Indians, for that matter. A respectful enquiry for my Marian engages me irresistibly to the man that makes it, and a compliment offered to her is ten thousand times more agreeable than the same thing given to myself. 'Tis a matter of common notoriety, and I am proud that it should have got abroad."

"Sure, Hastings, these people will all laugh at you in their sleeves, and pity you that you are under your wife's dominion."

"My Marian, three months ago they might have done so, though even then I should but have compassionated their lack of acquaintance with you. But now the entire world knows—what I alone knew before—with what a wife I am blessed. Believe me, I can't grudge even the sufferings you endured on hearing of my misfortunes, since the occasion served to call forth such exemplary fortitude on your part."

"Say rather desperation, Hastings. Had I been at your side —Ah, then I might have displayed fortitude, to assist if not to defend you."

"My Marian, I have never but once, and that was perpetually, rejoiced at my obedience to the mysterious influence that prompted me to leave you behind at Monghyr. I can't doubt its providential nature. Had you been with me, I should have been consumed with terror for your safety, your health. As it was, I suffered with you in your anxieties, but my fears for you were roused only by your own approach to Patna, and the wild fancies with which you tormented yourself, as your letters informed me."

"Alas, Hastings! how could I but be tormented, knowing you in such extremity of danger?"

"Believe me, the actual danger was but slight. If the Raja's forty thousand feared to attack my four hundred Seapoys here,

what hope of success could they have when I was once in Chunar? My greatest distress was for money, which was indeed extreme, but Azoph-ool-Dowlah's gift will carry us on until Bidgeygur is reduced, and Chyte Sing's treasures fall into our hands. The creature himself is escaped, carrying with him one lack in gold mohurs and fifteen or sixteen in silver, as it's estimated, and intends to seek refuge in Bundelcund, but every prince he passes will questionless bleed him on the way. His wife and mother are left in Bidgeygur with the bulk of the treasure, and that will save us."

"You would not restore him to the zemeendarry at the price of the surrender of the entire amount?" asked Mrs Hastings curiously.

"Nothing should persuade me—not even the express command of the Directors—to replace him in the Rauge,[1] even were it in my power. But I have already appointed as his successor his sister's son, Bauboo Mehipnarain, and invested him with the ensigns of sovereignty, and have almost completed my plans for the establishment of a complete system of justice and police in the city. Instead of being a blot upon our rule, and a scandal to the British name, we shall soon behold Bennaris renowned throughout India as an example of British toleration and liberality."

"Then what was the Nabob-Vizier's present?" asked Mrs Hastings.

"Ten lacks, part in cash and jewels, part in bills. I could have no hesitation in accepting it joyfully. Paid into the treasury, it relieved our most pressing embarrassments, and left me at liberty to carry on the war with a hope of success."

"You paid it into the treasury, Hastings?—a private gift!"

"How else could I accept it? But I an't so forgetful of your —nay, of our—interests as my Marian thinks. The money has been expended for the Company's advantage, I might almost say their salvation, and so long as the present scarcity continues, it's heartily at their service. But when better times arrive—why, then I design inviting them to refund it to me. I am a poor man, after all my years of labour here, and I have just—I may

[1] Raj.

say it without ostentation—rescued their empire from destruction, while you have saved for them the rich province of Behar. They must experience some gratitude, they would be inhuman else, and such a mark of it would be both grateful and welcome."

"You would receive it as a gift at their hands, though Azoph-ool-Dowlah has presented it to you already?"

"I can't take it at his hands, my oath of office forbids. But others have been permitted, by a special resolution of the Court, to retain similar gifts, and if the Directors preserve any kindness for one who has grown old in their service, they'll allow it in this case also. I have yet another claim on their consideration, my Marian. Colonel Muir has at length induced Scindia to come to an accommodation with us, and the treaty was signed a fortnight ago. With both Scindia and Moodajee our allies, and willing to act as mediators, we shan't be long in arriving at that arrangement with the Marattas which we have so long sought in vain. Then—then Hyder Naique and Teepoo Behauder may look to their own safety!"

"You have negociated dis peace since you left us, Hastings—in the midst of your other preoccupations?" cried his lady.

"Why, yes, my dearest. I have been in fairly frequent correspondence with Muir, both from this place and Chunar, and I can assure you 'twas not the least alleviation of my anxieties to perceive that the Maratta prince appreciated so well the true power of Britain as to be willing to negociate at all when our rule was under an eclipse. But pray, what are Beebee Ward's eyes enquiring of me so earnestly?"

"Oh, dear sir, the Carnatic! You have had news?"

"I have, indeed, ma'am. The good old General has once more defeated Hyder on his own chosen ground."

"The scene of Colonel Baillie's disaster, sir? But how can the intelligence have reached you so soon?"

"Why, ma'am, it has had all but two months. The Moorish year differs from ours, you know, and the anniversary of poor Baillie's fight fell by their reckoning on the last day of August, instead of on the 10th of September. The Mysoreans, to the number of eighty thousand, were occupying a very strong situa-

tion, but Sir Eyre turned first their left and then their right, compelling a retreat. I learn that they claim a drawn battle, but that's absurd, since the British bivouacked at night on the ground they had won, where the enemy had been encamped the night before."

"And was—was Mr Maxwell mentioned, sir?"

"No, ma'am, he wasn't, but that's a fact of good augury. Had any ill befell him, the General would not have failed to acquaint me of it, knowing the interest I have in him. You'll questionless soon receive his own account of the battle."

Thus one more hazard is surmounted, but how many yet remain!

BENNARIS, *Nov. ye 20th.*

Sure there must be a sort of malign foresight attaching to Sir Elijah Impey, so soon has his unkind reflection on the military gentlemen been justified. These men, on whom Mr Hastings has bestowed so many favours, repaid, as all believed, by a devotion so strong that it might almost be styled enthusiastic, have inflicted upon their benefactor a disappointment as cruel as any that have marked a career which has been prodigal in such trials. Ten days ago the fortress of Bidgeygur fell into our hands by a voluntary surrender, but the brightness of this success is tarnished by the absolute destruction of the hopes Mr Hastings had founded upon it.

Entering Mrs Hastings' dressing-room this morning, I found the Governor-General there, and perceiving that a discussion of some warmth was taking place, was about to withdraw, when my patroness called to me to remain. On the toilet lay an assemblage of elegant articles, the sight of which drew from me a cry of admiration—a very handsome sword of Moorish workmanship, the hilt and scabbard most delicately ornamented, and a complete set of dressing-boxes, inlaid with jewels in an extraordinary beautiful style.

"Ah, Hessy, you may well cry out!" says Mrs Hastings. "Was anything ever so pretty? And Mr Hastings insists upon sending 'em back to the officers!"

"Sure Mr Hastings must have very strong reasons, ma'am, before he could rob you of this gratification," said I.

"He has, ma'am," says Mr Hastings. "Is Mrs Ward aware that Major Popham and his officers have seized upon the whole of the treasure contained in the fortress of Bidgeygur, and divided it among themselves? These things they send as a peace-offering."

"Not Chyte Sing's treasure, sir?" I cried. "Not the money to which you looked to replenish our exhausted treasury?"

"The same, ma'am. Fearing lest I should prevent them, they began the distribution even before sending me the news of the fall of the place. To Mr Calcraft, who brought it and admitted what was going forward, I expressed my vehement dissatisfaction, and despatched Palmer riding post to stop them, but the scramble was completed when he arrived, even the junior subalterns taking twenty thousand rupees apiece!"

"Alas!" I cried, "is nobody to be trusted? Major Popham, of all men, thus to betray you, sir!"

"Why, ma'am, that's the worst part of it. Popham bases his action on a private letter wrote by me on another occasion and in the most familiar style. Some weeks ago the two Rannys, Chyte Sing's wife and mother, volunteered a surrender on the condition that they with their families and effects should be permitted to quit the fort without molestation, and receive for their subsistence the valuable jaghier of Hurlack. On Major Popham's consulting me, I replied that the acceptance or rejection of the offer must be decided by the officers themselves, since they would undoubtedly lose a considerable portion of the booty by the females being permitted to retire with their effects and without examination, and I could not dictate their course in such a case. Not any the slightest reference was made or intended to Chyte Sing's treasure; the chitt referred solely to the jewels and other valuables which the women would carry on their persons, and which the troops would naturally consider as belonging of right to themselves. Of that billet Popham has made the most uncandid use, claiming it as a full permission to divide among the troops whatever was found in the fort. The unsatisfactory nature of his plea is shown by his haste in distributing the money before I could lay hands on it; it was shroffed and paid out in an inconceivably brief space."

"And he offers no apology—no explanation, sir?"

"Why, he explains that he could not withstand the universal clamour and vehemence of his officers for the scramble. They remembered the Rohilla Prize-money, which has been locked up for near ten years already, waiting a special Act of Parliament or decision in the courts to authorise its being paid, and thought they would seize what they could lay hands on. How to get it back I can't tell. My warmest remonstrances have had no effect, my requests for the return of a portion of the money in the form of a loan are disregarded. Twenty-three lacks— Heavens! what would it not have done for us! And in the hope of deprecating my just wrath, they send these elegant trifles, trusting to make me a partner in their evil-doing. My Marian, you'll favour me by having them removed, and delivered to the cossids who brought them, to be returned instantly. It offends me even to see them on your table."

"But, Hastings," persisted his lady, "why not retain them? Why not secure what we can out of this heavy loss?"

"Because you would give colour to the infamous suspicion which these ungenerous men hope to arouse against me—that I connived at their gross usurpation."

"Oh, dear sir, that could never be!" I cried. "Who could suppose the head of a government in such straits for money to have lavished this immense sum on an army whose services, however meritorious, demanded no such huge reward?"

"Ma'am, there's no charge so inconsistent, no accusation so ridiculous, that my enemies will hesitate to make use of it. Marian, must I lay my commands upon you?"

"They are so divinely pretty!" sighed Mrs Hastings.

"You shall have the exact copies of them. Has your husband ever grudged you any gratification that wealth could procure or affection supply? Heavens, Marian! will you add to my distress?"

"Pray, Hester, summon the servants to fetch the things away. I take it very unkind in you, Hastings, not to humour me in this. Why should you expend your money on gifts for me when they can be obtained without charge? To me it appears that the officers display a very proper spirit in thus seeking to

disarm your just anger, and de acceptance of their genteel attention would enable you to make your request for a loan with a better grace. But since you regard it in so strange a manner, why, your Marian won't offer to oppose your unkind humour."

Mrs Hastings quitted the room in displeasure, leaving her husband too much wounded even to raise the curtain for her exit. Never in the course of my acquaintance with him have I seen his great mind thus distressed. But remembering my presence, he hastened instantly to excuse his lady.

"My head is so sadly confused," he said, "that I have failed to lay the matter intelligibly before Mrs Hastings. Could I have presented it in the correct light, she would have comprehended my motives immediately. Will Mrs Ward oblige me by observing minutely the workmanship of these lids and hinges, that she may be able to direct the goldsmith? I will have him set to work as soon as possible, and since Mrs Hastings admires the articles they must be copied in the exactest manner. That she takes pleasure in them will questionless induce me to do the same, though at present I detest the very sight of them."

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BENNARIS, *Dec. ye 29th.*

I have had but little time for writing of late, since my beloved patroness has again been suffering sadly. Her indisposition declared itself on the very evening that had witnessed her difference with Mr Hastings, and affected him in the most distressing manner. At first he blamed himself and his harshness as the cause, and when the physicians had unanimously assured him that the disorder must have been contracted some days before, he was hardly less moved, and still held himself guilty. A week after our arrival at Bennaris, he had attended Mrs Hastings to Chunar, since she insisted on beholding with her own eyes the fortress to which her husband owed his safety. The situation of this place, though highly advantageous in the military view, is yet very dangerous to the health, for standing upon a great rock of freestone overhanging the river, the lack of shade and the reflection from the water combine to produce an intense heat. Visiting every corner of the place, and con-

versing in the most affable style with every the most humble individual that had showed the least kindness to Mr Hastings, his lady overtasked her strength, and carried away with her a fever as a poor result of the eager hospitality extended to her. Yet no trace of this unhappy consequence appeared on the journey back, for I remember how highly she was entertained with Mr Hodges' description of the tutelary deity of Chunar, which is believed by the Gentoos to inhabit a certain altar in the citadel. I say inhabit, since all that's visible to the eye is a plain slab of black marble, but the poor pagans persist in declaring that the being they worship sits upon this slab in bodily shape day and night, save between the hours of six and nine in the morning, when he pays a visit to Bennaris. During this interval, deprived of his protection, the place is open to attack, and any foe might capture it, in the Gentoos' belief, so that Mr Hodges advised Mrs Hastings to be thankful that Chyte Sing had not been aware of the opportunity awaiting him.

Returned to Bennaris, my patroness made a point of visiting the principal scenes of the city, and taking part in all the entertainments offered her by the officers or the wealthy Gentoos, in order to demonstrate the tranquil and secure state to which the zemeendarry had been restored, thus increasing the distemper which might have been avoided by rest and physical care. The petulance, so unusual in her, which she displayed to Mr Hastings was altogether the result of her indisposition, as he confessed almost with tears on learning of the suffering which she had striven to conceal. All the alleviation that the most assiduous care on his part could provide was procured for her, and there were several nights when he insisted on being her sole nurse. The slight pique between them lasted no longer than the interview in which it had discovered itself, and Mrs Hastings must have had a heart of stone to have resisted the unaffected solicitude which made itself visible in her husband's haggard countenance and depressed aspect. The removal of his alarm became to her a more important object than the recovery of her own health, and she even urged his departure upon the tour he had designed making through the zemeendarry, that he might the more easily believe her perfectly

restored. She refused, however, to allow him to quit Bennaris until after the sixth of this month, which was the occasion of his fiftieth birthday—an event which he had always faithfully promised her to observe, as also the hundredth, in compensation for forbidding her the pleasure of celebrating the anniversary in any way in ordinary years. Sir Elijah, who was returned from his legal business on Mr Hastings' behalf at Lucnow, and was about departing, intending to pass Christmas at Sooksaugur with his lady and their little family, was prevailed with to wait till night, and all the Europeans in Bennaris met at dinner round Mr Markham's hospitable board. Mrs Hastings was not strong enough to endure the pleasing agitation inseparable from so joyful an occasion, but she and I, though our apartments are in a different portion of the garden, lost nothing of the affectionate enthusiasm which marked the drinking of Mr Hastings' health by the company with three times three, and the fervent expression of their respectful hope that they might be permitted to offer their congratulations in the same manner fifty years hence.

Mr Hastings undertaking after this celebration the tour of the zemeendarry which he had contemplated, we remained quietly here, Mrs Hastings gaining strength so rapidly as to delight her spouse on his return three days ago. 'Tis well for this great but unfortunate man to have such a consolation afforded him, for he has few others, and the state of the public credit, in particular, is almost desperate. The encreased revenue derivable from the zemeendarry of Bennaris, which Mr Hastings estimates at seventeen lacks, and the payment by the new Raja of the arrears owing by his predecessor, to which he has pledged himself, ought to effect a sensible improvement as soon as they begin to operate, but in the meantime the frightful drain on our resources caused by the war and the two bankrupt Presidencies must be met. If Sir Eyre Coote be not continually furnished with fresh supplies of troops, money and provisions, we may as well totally abandon the Carnatic, while the civil population of Madras, and the many unfortunates who have taken refuge there from Hyder's ravages, must starve if they be not fed with rice from Bengall. The Bombay Committee, learning nothing either

from their own failures or the efforts made by Mr Hastings to rectify them, continue to treat the war with the Marattas as though it were his personal affair, and decline to pay any of the troops engaged in it save their own, yet it must be carried on, and with vigour, until Scindia can induce his countrymen to make peace. In these circumstances, the only hope for a supply of money lies in the payment by the Nabob-Vizier of his debt to the Company, which amounts to two separate sums of fifty-five and twenty-six lacks respectively, and for liquidating which he is dependent upon the restoration by his mother and grandmother of the treasure unjustly acquired and retained by them. What is then the mortification of Mr Hastings to discover the most inconceivable slackness and hesitation in both the prince and Mr Middleton, who, as Resident at his court, is charged with advising him in the matter, so that not a single step has as yet been taken, either to resume the ladies' jaghiers, granting them a pecuniary equivalent, or to demand the surrender of the treasure? In the heat of his disappointment, Mr Hastings was near setting out for Lucnow in person, to enforce his just demands, but Mrs Hastings represented to him so forcibly the embarrassment he would bring upon Azoph-ool-Dowlah, and the ill-will certain to be roused among the country powers by a visit made for such a cause, that he has consented to await Mr Middleton's reply to the very strict commands he sent him three days ago.

BENNARIS, *Jan. ye 6th*, 1782.

Mr Hastings having received from Mr Middleton an assurance of his perfect competency to discharge the duties allotted to him, has determined, with some misgivings, upon returning to Calcutta. Mr Middleton's querulous complaints of the indecisive and temporising character of the Nabob-Vizier are ludicrously echoed in his own behaviour, for after asking for a regiment of Seapoys to assist the prince's Aumeel[1] in overcoming the powerful opposition prepared by the Begums, he took fright on learning that Sir John Cummings and his entire detachment were being despatched to his support, and entreated that the order might be revoked, lest the appearance of so large a force in the

[1] Amil.

heart of his dominions should affront the prince. Remote as is suspicion from the mind of Mr Hastings, the notion could not but suggest itself which is in everybody's mouth, that the astute ladies and their ministers had offered a genteel present both to the Nabob-Vizier and the Resident to leave them in possession, and that their pleas of inability to act, or reluctance to move, were only preparatory to throwing up the business altogether. Such is the emptiness of our treasury at the moment that, as I heard Mr Hastings observe, he could not now hold his hand even in the face of events or entreaties that might seem to compel him to show mercy, but there are none such here. The opposition prepared by the Begums is of a piece with their former behaviour. Having clung so long to their ill-gotten gains, they won't relinquish them at a word, either from Mr Hastings or from the Nabob-Vizier, to whom they bear so cordial a hatred that his mother has often declared she would rather throw her money and jewels into the sea than behold them in her son's hands, while his grandmother is in the habit of having the musnud or mattress on which he sits during his visits to her broken up and burnt. With persons capable of such unreasoning hostility no parley is possible, but I could wish, since these unhappy creatures are females, that the anger of their insulted prince might fall rather upon the so-called slaves, their ministers and instigators, than on themselves. The rapacity of these men is notorious, their ascendency over their mistresses complete, rising to such a pitch that not even for their own use can the Begums withdraw a single rupee of the disputed hoard without the signatures of both Jowar and Behar Ally Cawn.

CALCUTTA, *Feb. ye 19th.*

We are again in Calcutta, after an absence of eight months. On leaving Bennaris, Mr Hastings proceeded at first very slowly, in case it might be necessary for him to return and make a visit to Lucnow, but receiving at Patna an assurance from the Nabob-Vizier of his complete determination to obtain the restitution of the lands and money detained by the Begums, he quickened his pace, only making such provision that he could, were his presence imperatively required, effect the entire journey from the Presi-

dency to Lucnow in three weeks. From Boglepore he proceeded by land with dauck-bearers to Calcutta, leaving us to follow by water, since Mrs Hastings still wants much of her former strength, and reached the city eleven days before us. At the Council held the day after his arrival, he was able to announce the receipt of a letter from Mr Middleton, informing him that the Nabob-Vizier had already paid over fifty-five lacks out of the treasure reclaimed by him from his mother, the other twenty-six lacks remaining to be paid from the profits of the resumed jaghier. With this assistance, Mr Hastings trusts to be able to supply all the necessities of Bengall, and render effectual aid to those of the Carnatic, while he hopes to be able in a short time to withdraw the subsidy so long vouchsafed to the Presidency of Bombay.

The period of Mr Hastings' absence has been marked by two changes of extreme moment in the regulation of the affairs of this Presidency and of Madras respectively. At the latter place, the interregnum which has prevailed since the departure of Sir Thomas Rumbold has been terminated by the arrival of my Lord Macartney as Governor. This nobleman has served His Majesty in a representative character for many years, but has enjoyed no Indian experience—a fact which causes his appointment to be a good deal resented here. Mr Hastings, however, having received through his friends at home very flattering assurances of Lord Macartney's admiration for his person and labours, has wrote in the most open and familiar style to welcome him, and trusts to find a new æra dawn with his coming. The other change, which touches him even more nearly, is the arrival of Mr Macpherson, who was formerly of his acquaintance in Madras, to succeed to Mr Barwell's seat in the Council here. Of an extraordinary stature, and the most insinuating manners, this gentleman aims at re-establishing himself in the esteem of the Governor-General, which his intermediate behaviour had tended to forfeit, by the most genteel and complacent bearing, and Mr Hastings again reposes the greatest confidence in him.

CHAPTER XXVI

AN INDISPOSITION.

CALCUTTA, *March ye 4th*, 1782.

The momentous events through which the head of their government and its army have been passing appear to have left little mark upon the inhabitants of this place. The principal changes we observe after our absence consists in the extraordinary partiality of the ladies for turbands—surely a monstrous and unfeminine imitation of the dress of the male Indians—and the subscription dances held every Tuesday evening in the Harmonic House instead of the concerts and other entertainments formerly provided there. The society of the settlement is encreased by the addition of a number of ladies from Madras, who have removed hither on discovering that the Carnatic War an't likely to terminate at present, and though they are good enough to join in our gaieties in the most obliging manner, I incline to believe that but for their presence the polite world of Calcutta would remain unconscious of the misery and desolation reigning in the neighbouring Presidency.

I fear I grow censorious in contemplating the contrast of Bengall with the Carnatic, and forget the frequent rebukes addressed to me by those who resent the preoccupation which my best endeavours can't altogether conceal—such as that young persons and those engrossed all day in business must have their diversions, that to intermit these could be of no benefit to the army in the Carnatic, that by continuing our amusements we do much to settle the minds of the Indians—Mr Hastings' own argument this. But there returns upon my mind the recollection of Sir Eyre Coote's third great battle, at Chillangur,[1] about the end of September, when the British were in so miserable a plight from the soaking of all their tents and baggage owing to the tempestuous weather, and their horses and bullocks so incapable of moving through lack of forage, that

[1] Shalingarh

Hyder felt himself safe from attack, and imprudently permitted himself to be forced into an engagement. The Mysoreans lost over five thousand men, with a gun and three standards, but so desperate was the situation of the victors that the General declares he had willingly exchanged these trophies and all the credit of the victory for seven days' rice. Or I recall the relief of Tripassore in November, when the army marched through a flooded country, so ill supplied with provisions that one-half of the troops fasted on alternate days, and multitudes of camp-followers perished with hunger. Then I remember the gallant veteran himself, who has supported all these miseries at an advanced age and with a constitution impaired by sixteen months' fatigue and anxiety. On the verge of relinquishing his command and returning to Bengall, he allows himself to be dissuaded by the pathetic entreaties of the inhabitants of Madras, and takes the field once more. On the 5th of January he is discovered in his tent insensible from an apoplectic stroke, but the next day causes himself to be placed in a palanqueen, and is thus conveyed at the head of his army to the relief of Vellore. No such decisive victory as all would desire for him cheers the mind of this intrepid commander, and such profitable successes as occur fall to other hands. Negapatam is captured not by Sir Eyre Coote, but by Sir Hector Munro, who was actually on his return to England in a fit of spleen because at the battle of Pollilore the General recommended him to do his duty instead of offering advice. The siege-raising of Tellicherry, on the Mallabar Coast, which has been invested for two years, was accomplished with the most brilliant success by a force newly arrived from home, and the capture of Trincomalay, in the island of Zeloan,[1] was effected by the fleet. And even these events, so important in their bearing, are forgotten by Calcutta almost as soon as the smoke of the *feu-de-joye* fired at the New Fort has dispersed into the air!

I had offered some remark of this sort to the Chief-Justice at his lady's assembly three nights ago, when he confounded me by replying,

"Come, come, ma'am! If Mr Maxwell were promoted

[1] Ceylon.

captain, or even succeeded in performing some exploit that made him notorious, we should hear no more cavilling of this sort."

"I fear Sir Elijah Impey regards me as a hypocrite," said I.

"Questionless, ma'am, though an unconscious one, like most of your charming sex. Will you assure me that if Mr Maxwell received the promotion he doubtless merits, or became the theme of applauding tongues, you wouldn't rest content with the recognition granted him, and trouble yourself no further about the entire remainder of the army?"

"Indeed, sir, the main reason for my discontent would persist."

"What! you would continue to regard askance the diversions of the ladies and gentlemen of Calcutta for the sake of the General, who shows himself obstinately blind to Mr Maxwell's merits, and has disobliged Mr Hastings so shockingly and wilfully in every imaginable way?"

"Why, sir, I'll answer you there from Mr Hastings himself. Ungenerous and flighty as the General's behaviour may be, his resolution and intrepidity merit all possible support, and they shall have it so long as the power to afford it rests with me."

"A very tolerable imitation, ma'am! But you won't get me to credit you with any concern for the General if once your lover's future was assured."

He laughed loudly, and handed me over, as he phrased it, to Sir John Day to obtain an ice. I quitted him in the utmost indignation. Heavens! how can the mild and polished Mr Hastings confess a friendship with one so coarse and illiberal? But I am censorious again. Have I not beheld at Patna of what true friendship Sir Elijah is capable?

I was writing this in the powdering-closet off Mrs Hastings' dressing-room, which she permits me to reserve for my own use, since she has no need of it for its proper purpose, when I heard my name called. Emerging from my seclusion, I found that Mr Hastings had entered his lady's apartment, as is his frequent custom, for the refreshment of a few moments' conversation with her.

"You're aware that we have been threatened with the honour of a visit from the General, ma'am!" he says.

"Why, yes, sir—when he intended resigning the Carnatic command."

"Not only then, ma'am, but when we were up the river in the autumn. That was one of my principal reasons for resolving against going to Lucnow—the fear that he would come round and terrify Messieurs Wheler and Macpherson into admitting some captious proposition dictated by himself, which would embarrass all our future actions. But now his anger is turned against my Lord Macartney, and his sole desire is to be assured of my support. The condition of his health, so ill-fitted for a voyage, and the fear lest he should play into his adversary's hands by quitting the Coast, have happily determined him to send a messenger instead of appearing in person, and in order to predispose me the more in his cause, he has chosen the embassador he believes most agreeable to me. That embassador, ma'am, is his Persian interpreter."

"Oh, sir! dear sir!" I cried. "Is it possible?"

"He is on his way hither at this moment, ma'am."

"And when—oh, when—dear sir, what does that smile signify? Is it—can it be—do you expect him soon? This month, perhaps? not this week? Pray don't tantalize me, sir."

"Is this the sedate Mrs Ward? My Marian, I think it's well I gave no hint beforehand of this agreeable possibility. Nay, ma'am, don't mistake me; 'twas but a possibility, no more, and I would not agitate your mind with vain emotions. Until to-day, I would say, for I have just heard that Maxwell is arrived in the river, and will be with us to-morrow, all being well."

"Oh, dear sir!" I could utter no more, and fled from the room, to give free course to my joyful, my grateful tears.

CALCUTTA, *March ye 23rd.*

For close upon three delectable weeks I have enjoyed the society of my beloved Maxwell, and now I have once more beheld him depart to the dangers and hardships of war, bidding him go with (I trust,) no less resolution than before, though with the most supreme and almost overwhelming reluctance. The benevolence of Mr Hastings has permitted my

presence at the greater part of those conferences in which he sought, by questioning Maxwell closely, to inform himself accurately of the true state of the Carnatic, and the exact situation of our affairs there, and thus I am become more fully acquainted with the melancholy truth than any other person in Calcutta. Never, surely, was either a government or a military commander confronted with so many or such perplexing problems. That we have an army at all in the Carnatic at this date would seem to be possible, under Providence, only by the exercise of the most consummate military genius on the part of Sir Eyre Coote, coupled with the most extraordinary slackness on the part of Mr D'Orves, the French admiral, who appears to have had our troops in his power, during their coast marches, again and again, but to have neglected to seize his opportunity.

The difficulties of providing for the sustenance of the army are, so Maxwell assures us, almost incredible. In former days, when my Lord Clive and Colonel Stringer Lawrence conducted their celebrated campaigns in the Carnatic, provisions were usually to be obtained without any extraordinary hardship, but now, not only is the number to be provided for infinitely greater, but the country people, themselves on the verge of extinction through hunger, need only the faintest rumour of the approach of the army to induce them to conceal or remove their stores—and this in a region that has already been laid waste by Hyder Ally. After Colonel Baillie's defeat, and the disgraceful retreat of Sir Hector Munro, the Madras Committee, like the Greeks when Constantinople was threatened by the Barbarians, forgot they had any enemy but each other. Although they had sent such pressing entreaties to Bengall for reinforcement, they confined their own activities to recriminatory accusations in Council, so that Sir Eyre Coote, on his arrival, found neither food nor transport for it prepared for his army. The utmost quantity of rice, in the form called *paddy*, that can be carried by a Seapoy on the march is two days' supply, since he must also carry the implements for beating it out from the husk. For the Europeans of the force, who cannot subsist upon a vegetable diet, beef can only be obtained by sending out huge foraging parties, sometimes comprising as many as four or five battalions, to sweep

the fields and jungles of cattle for twenty or thirty miles round. The draught-bullocks, indispensable for the conveyance of the guns and ammunition-waggons, are of so inferior a character, when they can be obtained at all, that ten animals are required to draw a tumbril which is at ordinary times an easy load for six.

In the face of these difficulties, what has actually been accomplished appears all the more marvellous. The battle of Porto Novo, the loss of which would have implied the fall of Fort St George and the destruction of Colonel Pearse's force, which was marching from the north to join the General, was fought only *in the nick of time*, as they say, since in another day Hyder would have so strengthened his left flank as to render it incapable of being turned. The consequences of a defeat such as this would have involved were brought home to the troops two months later at the battle of Pollilore, where our army found the ground they were forced to traverse covered with the yet unburied remains of Colonel Baillie's unfortunate detachment. In this battle Sir Hector Munro took no part, sitting sullen under a tree, owing to the sharp words he had received from the General. I trust he profited by the contemplation of the ghastly relics of the brave men who had owed their deaths to his feeble pusillanimity the year before! Were Sir Eyre Coote's severity always as well deserved as in this case, nobody would quarrel with it, but the harshness and injustice with which he has used Colonel Pearse would seem to have no excuse beyond an arbitrary determination to assert his powers. No sooner had the detachment, which had accomplished so memorable a march in the face of such extraordinary obstacles, joined him at Pulicat, than he disbanded the Golandauze battalions, and breaking up the entire force, distributed it among the other brigades, thus depriving many of the officers of their commands, in direct defiance of Mr Hastings' written orders to Colonel Pearse. Of this tyrannical conduct we had already been made aware, not only by the Colonel's affecting letters to Mr Hastings, but by the insulting and indecorous epistles of Sir Eyre himself, who declared that the Governor-General had arrogated powers belonging to him for the express purpose

of disobliging him, so that he rejoiced in being able to baulk his intentions, but Maxwell was able to enlighten us further. He had beheld with almost uncontrollable grief and indignation the usage Colonel Pearse had received, and shared the common belief of the army that the General's pique against him was due to his standing in the way of Sir Eyre's desire to give the command of the Bengall detachment to Colonel Owen, a King's officer, his aid-du-camp and adjutant-general. Even the querulous arrogance of the veteran failed to lead him so far as to depose Colonel Pearse for no fault and in opposition to the Governor-General's orders, but having gratified his malignity by leaving him with no detachment to command, he further punished him, (questionless for existing; I know no other offence,) by pursuing him with a ceaseless severity. At Chillangur the Colonel was carried off among the retreating enemy by his horse's taking fright and running away with him, but he fought his way back; a little later, being in charge of the rearguard, he protected the retirement of the whole army by a brilliant action, and brought his men off safely; but the General, not content with depriving him of his allowances as Brigadier, has twice superseded him in that office in favour of Major Lang. Again and again I have seen the generous blood rise in Mr Hastings' forehead at Maxwell's recital of the indignities inflicted upon their common friend, and I rejoiced to hear the message he entrusted to him, assuring the Colonel of a welcome sufficiently warm to obliterate all his misfortunes if he could obtain leave to come round to Calcutta.

Maxwell's narratives have not been entirely of this gloomy complexion, though inspiriting they could not be. He has related to us many curious facts respecting Hyder, such as that when he was about to invade the Carnatic, he caused a *Jebbum*, or Gentoo religious incantation, to be performed in all the pagodas[1] of that sect, though himself the strictest of Mossolmen, desiring, as it's thought, to engage in his interest what deities soever might exist. Maxwell described also the odd effect produced on watching the approach of the Mysorean

[1] All Hindu temples seem to have been called pagodas, at any rate in South India.

cavalry, since the horsemen are all in a state of apparent intoxication, having inflamed their courage with a drug called *bang*, and their onset is preceded by a murmuring sound, increasing in vehemence as the line advances, which is caused by the general and vociferous heaping of invective on the foe. The principal warriors among these horsemen are distinguished by the name of Behauders,[1] Prince Teepoo, the ruler's son, being styled the Burra Behauder, and from this name our officers have framed a new word—*behaudering*—to describe the insolent style in which the youthful chieftains parade their horses in front of our lines, hurling imprecations from a secure distance, and confident that the Seapoys won't be ordered to fire upon a solitary foe. This sport is pursued with more circumspection, however, since Lieutenant Dallas, of the General's bodyguard, accepted a challenge which was addressed to him by one of the Behauders in the most insulting terms. The young gentleman is six feet in height, and rides a black horse admirably suited to his stature, so that he makes a conspicuous figure in our lines. His skill in arms corresponding to his bodily endowments, he effected a victory not only over his first challenger, but over the many others who desired to measure their strength against his. On one occasion alone did he meet his match, and then the contest lasted so long, and appeared so incapable of decision, that the combatants were at length induced by their respective comrades to draw off.

This incident Maxwell related one evening at supper, for the entertainment of the company, and Miss Touchet, younger sister of Mrs Motte, a good creature enough, but sufficiently youthful to be excessively romantic, cried out, "Oh, how I adore that dear Lieutenant Dallas! I would give a hundred gold mohurs to see him and his black horse! Pray, Mr Maxwell, can you relate such exploits without burning to share in them? How is it you don't provoke a challenge, if none are addressed to you, so as not to leave all the glory to your comrade?"

"Why, indeed, ma'am," says he, a little disconcerted by this sudden attack, "I hardly know. Perhaps because there's a lady here in Calcutta to whom my life is of some slight concern."

[1] Bahadars.

"But sure 'tis for her honour you should do it!" cries the young lady. "You disgrace her when you seem to hang back —don't he, Mrs Ward?"

I could hardly speak for indignation, but catching the kind yet rallying glance of Mr Hastings, made an effort at self-command. "Mr Maxwell will never hang back when his duty is in question, ma'am," I said, "but he would not be the person I think him if he risked his life for nothing but a contest of rashness or folly with Teepoo's Behauders."

"Well said, ma'am!" cried Mr Hastings. "May Mr Maxwell always continue to deserve your good opinion!"

At Mr Cleveland's house, BOGLEPORE, *Aug. ye 8th.*

Since Maxwell's departure I have hardly had courage to write, so mournful have been the events occurring in the Carnatic, but secluded in this rural retreat, and confined to the society of my patroness and the aid-du-camp in attendance upon her, I return to these pages in a rare hour of solitude. Despite all the endeavours of Mr Hastings to promote peace, by means of the most delicate and polite epistles addressed to each of the disputants, the dissensions between my Lord Macartney and the General still continue, and the latter is thwarted in all his efforts by the want, not only of supplies, but of moral support. To such a degree is this opposition now carried, that when Sir Eyre Coote attempted to overawe Hyder into making peace by informing him that the Marattas were about entering into an alliance with us, Lord Macartney assured the prince that there was no truth in the assertion, and that nothing could be done in the matter without its being first referred to himself!

Of greater consequence than this negative ill-success was the terrible disaster that befell our arms in the month of February in Tanjour, when Colonel Braithwaite, misled by false information, was surprised by Prince Teepoo with an army of twenty thousand, comprising a considerable force of French under Mr Lally, and suffered a fate very similar to that of the unfortunate Colonel Baillie. A portion of his Seapoys succeeded in escaping, the remainder, to the number of fifteen hundred, with all the European officers, being either killed or taken prisoners. To the

dead, so say the fugitives, has fallen the happier fate, since the prisoners taken by the Mysoreans are destined to a frightful captivity in the dungeons of Seringapatam, where even now, 'tis said, some few still linger in misery of those unfortunates captured in Baillie's disaster near two years ago. Close upon this terrible news came an alarm that affected us in Calcutta even more nearly, for the 35th Regiment, stationed at Burdwan, broke into open mutiny when ordered on service. The mutiny was speedily crushed with the utmost severity, but its occurrence was eloquent of the doubts beginning to infect the minds of the Seapoys, who had been accustomed to boast, "The good fortune of our masters is ours." Among the causes contributing to their unsettlement was questionless the arrival of the huge French fleet, specially designed for our destruction, which had just been signalled on the coast. The state of anxiety which prevailed at this juncture was truly horrible, everybody anticipating decisive intelligence—only too probably of the worst character—by every wind. At the beginning of April our minds were a little relieved by the news of Sir Edward Hughes's naval action with Mons. Souffrein, resulting in the capture of one of the French transports, the L'Auriston,[1] with troops on board, and the rescue of five English vessels which had been taken. A *feu de joye* was ordered in honour of this event, which was considered equal to a victory owing to the vast disparity between the two fleets.

During all this period the most affecting letters were continually being received from Sir Eyre Coote, who was labouring alternately to shame and to cajole the Madras authorities into affording him assistance. The melancholy record of Seapoys in arrears and deserting, of Europeans left in hospital, carried in doolies, falling on the march through sunstroke, dying of fatigue, and the unfortunate General himself worn out and almost overwhelmed, must, one would have thought, have moved hearts of stone, but these, instead of softening, might have become adamant, so keenly did they continue to resent the infraction of their punctilio by the General's being placed in a superior situation over them. The indomitable veteran succeeded, nevertheless, in bringing Hyder to an action on the

[1] Properly Lauriston, the home of John Law.

2nd of June, by threatening his grand magazine and fortress of Arnee. The Mysoreans retreating almost immediately, our troops, pursuing them with extraordinary spirit, succeeded in capturing one of their guns, after which the pursuit was compelled to be arrested owing to the fatigue of both men and horses, and the want of provisions. Possessing the means of subsistence, the General holds that he could have captured Arnee and driven Hyder up the Gauts, thus temporarily clearing the Carnatic, whereas the crafty Mysorean revenged himself two days later by decoying a large party of our troops, commanded by a young officer of more spirit than conduct,[1] into an ambush, and so cutting them off. Sir Eyre Coote is now returned to the neighbourhood of Madras, the sole magazine in the Presidency, whither his entire army must be transported whenever it needs to be revictualled.

Throughout these varied misfortunes Mr Hastings retains his calmness, and has even found time to perfect his scheme for settling the black officers, Seapoys and Lascars,[2] who may be wounded or worn out in our service, upon lands of their own, principally in the Jungleterry, under the benevolent care of Mr Cleveland. He has also been rejoiced by the conclusion of a treaty of peace with the Marattas, the object to which he has devoted his energies since first hearing of Hyder's invasion. The ingenious Mr Anderson, who was despatched to reside with Scindia, has contrived to induce that prince to act both as mediator and guarantor of a treaty with the rest of his nation. The task was far from being an easy one, the Marattas having been emboldened by General Goddard's failure to penetrate to Poonah a year ago, (which I find I have not set down, in my preoccupation with troubles nearer at hand,) and the French and Hyder using every means to prevent an accommodation. We stand little better than we did after the treaty of Poorunder, having purchased peace at the price of the greater portion of our conquests, and attached Scindia to our cause by presenting him with the district of Baroach. The utmost discontent is rife in many quarters, but Mr Hastings maintains his ground. "To

[1] Leadership.

[2] These helped in the Artillery, under the name of "gun Lascars."

make peace with the Marattas," he says, "requires that we have Scindia friendly, even gratified; to crush Hyder we must have the Marattas peaceful, or if possible allied; and to enjoy any security in the Carnatic we must crush Hyder. Whatever I do or don't do, I shall be blamed; therefore I'll disregard opinion altogether, and take the sole steps that present themselves to me as practicable."

Even now I fear there are fresh misfortunes in store for this great man. The treaty, though signed by Scindia and the Maratta representatives at Salboy in May, and ratified at Calcutta in June, is not fulfilled. There are rumours—unsupported so far by any letters from home—that Mr Hastings' enemies have obtained some signal triumph over him in Parliament, and Nannah Furneess appears to be exercising every pretext for delay in the hope of escaping from his engagements. In the Council, some misgiving—I can't call it a suspicion—has forced itself upon the mind of Mr Hastings with regard to the good faith of Mr Macpherson, whom he believed devoted to his cause, and these reasons, with the absence of good news from the Carnatic, have determined him not to quit Calcutta for the present. We are indeed solitary here, lacking the agreeable visits he used to make us at Chinchura, and cheered only by an occasional letter or a still rarer traveller.

CALCUTTA, *Sept. ye 9th.*

A sudden and awful emergency has transferred us from our rural solitude to the city. Ten days ago we were placidly established at Boglepoor, finding what entertainment we could in the discourses of the amiable Mr Cleveland and the humours of the aid-du-camp, Lieutenant Turner, a young kinsman of Mr Hastings' and a very sprightly and agreeable person. The sole anxiety that disquieted Mrs Hastings and myself was the brief and hurried style of Mr Hastings' letters, and the irregular and (for him) protracted intervals at which they arrived. Our anxious minds suggested that some new danger was threatening, which the Governor-General desired to conceal from his lady, but no intelligence could be obtained from the hircarrahs, though we questioned them diligently. The Governor-General's

family being diminished by the absence of Major Palmer, whom he had been compelled to despatch to Lucnow, with Major Davy, the Persian secretary, as his assistant, to remonstrate with the Nabob-Vizier and Mr Middleton on the continued delay in the payment of the prince's debt to the Company, all his letters were brought by these native messengers. Mrs Hastings was extraordinary desirous to send some European whom she could trust to Calcutta, to observe the true posture of affairs there for her information, but Mr Turner had orders not to quit her, and Mr Cleveland could not be detached from his duty. Finally, our doubts were resolved, though in a style contrary to our desires, by the appearance of young Mr Touchet, brother to Mrs Motte, a brisk officious sort of person, but of an amiable disposition, who was on his way from Hoogley to Patna by the river. Calling in, as he said, to give us the news, he was charmed to be able to relieve our minds with the intelligence that by the latest advices from Calcutta Mr Hastings was no worse.

For the instant I thought Mrs Hastings would have thrown herself upon the young gentleman and shaken the truth out of him, and he, appearing to share my opinion, retreated a step or two with an air of apprehension, but she restrained herself with a visible effort, and demanded of him to tell her precisely what he had heard. In a brief space we were made aware that Mr Hastings was suffering from a fever, such as is frightfully common in Calcutta at this season, that he had opposed so long the efforts of his physicians to induce him to intermit his labours and submit to repose that the distemper had gained a stronger hold, and that a considerable anxiety was felt respecting him. What confounded Mr Touchet, as I could see, was the discovery that Mrs Hastings was ignorant of her husband's situation, for the uncommon affection existing between them is so notorious as to be almost a proverb, and the young gentleman was hard put to it to stammer out suggestions of wilful concealment on the part of the physicians or carelessness on that of the hircarrahs, while evidently believing that he was come suddenly upon the traces of a matrimonial disagreement. But Mrs Hastings wasted no time upon setting him right.

"Bid the *feelcherra* be at the Gaut in an hour, sir," she said to Mr Turner. "Hester, see that Sukey puts up what is necessary for an immediate journey, and is ready to attend us. Maria may remain and pack what is left, and come down after us in the budgerow. I will see Mr Cleveland and explain the matter to him, and give the *consummer*[1] his orders. Pray, Mr Touchet, oblige me with your hand into the garden. I am unutterably indebted to you for your news. The presumption of these physicians is monstrous. Because they fear for my own health, they venture to deceive me as to that of Mr Hastings!"

I could not believe that the physicians would dare such a concealment upon their own responsibility, and when we were on board the *feelcherra*, (which is a vessel far smaller than a budgerow, but correspondingly more swift,) I ventured to ask Mrs Hastings if she thought so. She regarded me with scorn.

"Have you forgot what I told you at Monghyr, Hessy? 'Tis by Mr Hastings' orders. He can't endure that I should behold him in the melancholy circumstances of a state of sickness. He has declared again and again he would never permit it, and he has sufficient resolution to die without the consolation my presence would afford him rather than give way. Ah, Hastings, what a disposition is thine! The mildest, cruellest, softest, most unyielding of men!"

"He fears the effect of the protracted exertion of nursing him on your own health, ma'am," I suggested. "'Tis his kindness for you makes him cruel."

"True, but there's also apprehension—can you credit it, Hessy?—he fears that I might learn to love him less, seeing him in such a situation! You know his delicacy, his extraordinary scrupulousness in every the most minute article of conduct—well, he torments himself with the notion that in the petulance or the indifference arising out of the distemper he might fail in some polite observance and give me cause to blame him in my mind! Who but the most humble-minded of creatures could even have conceived such an alarm? yet I vow I love him the better for it, absurd though it be. But yield to his unreasonable distrust of me I won't!"

[1] Khansaman.

I could perceive by the extraordinary openness she showed in this speech that my patroness was deeply agitated, but she suffered herself to betray no further apprehension. She exhibited no resentment at our narrow quarters, if she was even aware of them, refusing to occupy herself with any pursuit, or to sanction any halt, bidding Mr Turner promise the *serang* and the *dandees*[1] a genteel present if they would continue the voyage all night instead of drawing up to the bank and remaining there. We progressed with the most astonishing swiftness in consequence of this generous offer, and Mr Turner communicated to me his alarm that some accident might occur, since at this season of inundation the river is full of currents and objects dangerous to navigation, and is also liable to sudden and tempestuous bursts of wind. Particularly is this the case with the spot we were approaching, the great rocks of Cohlgong, where, steering between the rocks and the shore, we should become exposed to an eddy, caused by the collision of the obstructed current with a torrent flowing from a ravine in the hills. Neither of us venturing to suggest this to Mrs Hastings, the feelcherra was continuing its precipitate course, when, with a frightful shock and a noise like that of a prolonged clap of thunder, we were all flung violently against the side of the cabin, the whole of the furniture and loose articles falling upon us.

I an't ashamed to confess that I fully believed our last moment to be arrived, since it was clear that the vessel had been thrown upon its side by a sudden squall, and my final thoughts, as I considered them, flew to Maxwell. Mr Turner, retaining in an astonishing degree his presence of mind, was the first to extricate himself from the piled-up furniture, and ordered Sukey roughly to subdue her immoderate lamentations and assist him in endeavouring to force open the sliding door, which was jammed. By a most happy accident, all the shutters on the side of the boat opposite to that on which the wind came had been closed a few moments before, to prevent the excessive draughts, and therefore, though this side was now immersed in the water, scarcely a drop entered. Finding it impossible to

[1] The captain and rowers.

open the door, Mr Turner, in the most agile manner, made a spring at one of the open windows in the side of the cabin which was now over our heads, and forcing his head and shoulders through it, called to the serang. Returning after an instant's conversation, he informed us that the boat was held down in the water by the mast and sail, which the crew were proposing to cut away, in the hope that it would then right itself, and recommended our continuing in our present disagreeable situation until the result of their efforts could be seen. Mrs Hastings calling to him that we would act entirely on his advice, he descended among us again, and we assisted him in heaping up the furniture so as to render it possible for us to reach the window if this should prove necessary.

With great coolness and good-nature the young gentleman told us that he would now make his way on deck, and see whether it were possible to come by the landing-boat, as in that case he would drag us through the window one by one, and we might clamber down into the small boat over the hull of the feelcherra. Mrs Hastings desiring him not to trouble himself, since she would not quit the feelcherra if it could be righted, he left us, to take the command of the crew and servants clinging to the upper works on deck, who were all, with the exception of the serang, palsied with fear. We heard movements of an energetic sort and deliberate commands succeeding the confused maledictions and supplications which had hitherto met our ears, and presently our youthful leader shouted to us to close all the shutters on the upper side of the cabin, which after an extraordinary difficulty we succeeded in doing, erecting a fresh heap of the furniture in order to attain each. The muffled voice of Mr Turner then directing us to attach ourselves firmly to some immovable object, we grasped with all our strength the beams which support the sides of the cabin, and after a frightful tumult of noise outside, felt the vessel begin to resume its ordinary position. A series of violent plunges from one side to the other marked its return to an upright posture, and we saw the reason for the precaution of closing the shutters. As soon as the water had run off the deck, Mr Turner succeeded in forcing the cabin door, and announced that we were about to draw

in to the bank for the night. But the young gentleman was speedily to learn that, in spite of his brief exertion of authority, he was still under female orders. On hearing that the feelcherra had providentially suffered no damage beyond the loss of the mast and sail, Mrs Hastings declared her intention of proceeding immediately by means of the oars, the current being in our favour. This determination Mr Turner endeavoured in vain to combat, offering all the arguments that occurred to him, and concluding with the pathetic enquiry how he should answer to Mr Hastings if any harm should befall his lady.

"Why, as to that," says my patroness very coolly, "if I am drowned, you, sir, will in all probability be involved in the same misfortune, so that possibility need not trouble you."

Thus answered, Mr Turner yielded, with an extreme reluctance, and we continued our voyage, Mrs Hastings reconciling the crew to the exertion by the most liberal promises. Her courage in proceeding was justified by the result, for we reached Calcutta without further accident, and borrowed palanqueens from the gentlemen residing nearest the Gaut to carry us to Government House, Mrs Hastings resigning without a murmur her ordinary punctilio of never travelling in any equipage but her own, or without her retinue of chubdars and soontaburdaars.

Entering the mansion, we proceeded at once to the apartments of Mr Hastings on the ground floor, my patroness refusing the offer of Mr Turner to run on in advance and announce her approach. Two or three of the gentlemen of Mr Hastings' family were gathered in the varendar, their countenances full of concern, which disappeared as if by magic upon the approach of Mrs Hastings. Declining their eagerly offered civilities, she hastened on into Mr Hastings' dressing-room, where Mr Thompson, his private secretary, and three physicians—the excellent Dr Jackson, the Governor-General's own surgeon, who is oddly named Dr Francis, and Dr Balfour—were assembled in serious consultation.

"Indeed, gentlemen," Mr Thompson was saying, "I have done my utmost to rouse him. I had Cawntoo Bobboo enter with a monstrous great pile of accounts demanding attention, but he vouchsafed no notice. I endeavoured to convince him

that the news from the Carnatic was of great moment—in vain. The *munchy*[1] attended with the usual correspondence from the country powers, but could not get an order for reading it aloud. A pacquet from England, or the intelligence of some fresh catastrophe, might rouse our illustrious friend, but neither is to hand."

"The stupor must be broken," says Dr Jackson, with his usual air of mild authority, "and I propose, gentlemen, since none of you will second me, to take upon myself the responsibility of disregarding Mr Hastings' commands, and acquainting his lady of his situation. Heaven grant she may arrive before it be too late!"

"She's here, sir," said Mrs Hastings, who had paused behind the curtain at the door, in order to learn from the conversation of the physical gentlemen the true posture of affairs, "and she would ask how it is you have all conspired to keep her in ignorance on a topic that concerns her so deeply?"

The gentlemen had all turned towards her with the most lively manifestations of delight, and Dr Jackson replied with the utmost benevolence, "Mrs Hastings may rest assured that we should only have adopted such a course at the imperative command of Mr Hastings himself."

"You have overruled my wishes often enough, sir, and Mr Hastings has supported you. Now you will support me in overruling his. Pray, Hester, be so good as to take my cloak. We will waste no more time, gentlemen, if you please."

"One moment, ma'am—" Mr Thompson barred her way. "The course of public affairs continues sadly melancholy. From the *Leyden Gazettes* received at Bombay, there can be no doubt Mr Hastings has been censured in Parliament, and his recall demanded. The Marattas are still haggling over ratifying their treaty, and the negociations with Hyder are broken off. There's no good news."

"I thank you, sir. I won't attempt to console Mr Hastings with the recital of our public calamities," and Mrs Hastings entered the adjoining room, welcomed with the most extravagant demonstrations of joy by the black servant on the threshold. Pausing, she uttered the one word, "Hastings!"

[1] Munshi.

To the complete stupefaction of the physicians, we heard Mr Hastings reply clearly, raising himself in bed, "My Marian! have I indeed the happiness to behold you, or does Heaven favour me with a bright apparition in your likeness?"

"He has not uttered so many words for three days!" whispered Mr Thompson.

"Heaven has preserved our benefactor," said the pious Dr Jackson, "and with no help from any skill of ours. But for the powerful stimulant of his lady's presence, this stupor must have proved fatal to him."

I could not restrain my tears, and fled from the apartment to Mrs Hastings' rooms on the floor above. Alas! how incurably selfish are our minds even at their most elevated moments! My tears sprang less from sympathy than from the conviction that seized me that should Maxwell lie in equal need of my presence, he would have expired many weeks before I could so much as learn that he was ill.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AN ACCUSATION.

BELVIDERE-HOUSE, ALLYPORE, *Oct. ye 17th*, 1782.

The protracted indisposition of our revered Mr Hastings, during which he has been nursed with the utmost vigilance and tenderness by his lady, is now happily at an end, and for the last fortnight he has been recruiting his health in this agreeable spot, having refused to remove to a greater distance from Calcutta, in the expectation of letters from home, which are now at length arrived. To day he has held a sort of informal *lever* for the reception of the many persons who desired to congratulate him unofficially on his recovery, among them Mr Stables, the new member of Council, and a gentleman who is come overland by way of Venice and Bussorah, bringing a

pacquet from Major Scott. The *levee* over, the Governor-General appeared in Mrs Hastings' room, supported by Mr Thompson, and submitted, with polite protestation, to her command that he should repose himself upon a couch. Looking round upon us from his cushions with a sigh of relief,

"How happy am I," he said, "to find myself once more in the society of those whose attachment I can't doubt! Would that I were equally blessed out of doors as within! But I ask too much. How could there be a world filled with such creatures as my good Thompson, my kind Beebee Ward, and above all my Marian, who has favoured me during these past weeks with such proof of her condescending affection as is almost without example in the whole history of female devotion?"

"Hastings," says his lady, with mock reproach, "you frame these compliments with the sole object of justifying yourself. If it were so extraordinary a thing that I should tend you in your sickness, why take such infinite pains that no intelligence of it should reach me?"

"Because my Marian, the greatest of women, is accustomed to transcend the limits imposed upon her sex. Why, leaving your obliging care of me out of the question, your behaviour, my dearest, in the frightful peril to which you were exposed on your journey—of which I can never think without the most poignant emotion—exceeds even the heroism of which I knew you capable. Turner assures me he would gratefully have paused or put back, but in face of your constancy and resolution he was ashamed to press it."

"Any heroism displayed was shared equally by Hester, I'll assure you; indeed, hers exceeded mine. I never questioned reaching you in safety, but she cried out like a heroine in a romance, 'Alas, Maxwell! I shall never see you more,' when the boat went over."

"I shall envy Maxwell," says Mr Hastings kindly, seeing me overwhelmed with confusion, "if my Marian's thoughts, instead of flying to me, were sufficiently at liberty to permit her to remark the anguish of her amiable companion at such a moment."

"Indeed, sir, I forgot that the feelcherra carried the fortunes

of Mr Hastings, and was therefore incapable of destruction," said I.

"Hastings and his fortunes! You're right, ma'am; his true fortunes, bound up as they are in her who is at once the admiration and the inspirer of all who have the happiness of her acquaintance, are unassailable even by the weapons of malice. But his worldly fortunes—well, they are lamentably near shipwreck, or would be, were he moved by the current of common opinion."

"My love, I fear the Europe news was not of the best?" said Mrs Hastings.

"The worst possible—unless future advices should disclose a yet deeper depth. How often, my Marian, have we deplored, even resented, the lukewarmness of my Lord North's support, his ungenerous lack of confidence in the man on whom he had imposed such laborious tasks! But his Administration was thrown out in the spring, as we had gathered from the rumours, and to the deep sea succeeds the devil, in the persons of Mr Burke and Mr Dundas. Burke brings up a string of forty-four resolutions, condemning each and every act of my government from its commencement, which were passed in a House of but twenty-six members, and on that ground my Lord Advocate announces a motion for my recall. Scott saves me only by an appeal to the Court of Proprietors—the Directors thinking more of conciliating Administration than of justice to their faithful servant—and they decline to attend to a suggestion emanating from only one branch of the legislature. But, Marian, Mrs Ward, what think you was the supreme crime on Mr Hastings' part that gave Dundas the courage to assail him? What but his supreme claim on his country's gratitude—the Bennaris affair, when, with a handful of Europeans, he faced a province in arms, called armies to his support, and saved the British dominion in India!"

"Hastings, it is impossible! They have heard some garbled, some untrue version of the matter. When your report reaches them, you will be justified."

"My Marian, they have no desire to justify me. What but deliberate malice could have induced them to seize upon a partial rumour as affording an occasion for my recall, without

even waiting for my own report of the transaction? What but an absolute frenzy of hatred could lead them to recall me in the full intention of sending out Mr Francis or Sir Matthew Mite to take my place?"

"Impossible!" cried Mrs Hastings and I together.

"Their choice was limited to those two persons, until the excellent Scott revealed the true character of both. Francis, who amassed a greater fortune in his five years here than I enjoy after a lifetime spent in India; General Smith, the vilest of mankind, arrogant, grasping, inconceivably cruel, monstrously rich, the worst and most notorious of all those *Nabobs* who have brought disgrace upon the name of the Company— Heavens! could my most bitter enemy honestly believe that he was effecting an improvement in replacing me by one of them? Sure the train of mourners attending the departing Governor to the Gaut, had it happened, would have left only two or three worshippers of the rising sun to salute the new!"

"And this monstrous persecution springs entirely from your failure to patronise[1] Mr Burke's brother, sir!" I cried.

"That's Captain Joe Price's explanation, I know, ma'am, and 'tis certain the gentleman did wait upon me, and I did neglect to offer him any situation commensurate with his own notion of his merits, but I can't believe a person of Mr Burke's elevated mind and commanding talents would allow that to influence him. No, this is my reading of the riddle. Mr Burke is a humourist,[2] and his present humour takes the form of believing me the worst of men. Indeed, he has a very strong support for his belief, if you'll consider it a moment. As having had the misfortune to incur his dislike, and having spent many years in India, I must questionless have amassed a huge fortune by improper means. But I have sent home no great sums, nor have I any invested here, so that my fortune must have been expended, and that in some unlawful manner. The gentlemen returning from India, with the sole exceptions of Mess. Francis and Macintosh, declare me to be a good sort of man, beloved by

[1] Patronise had at this time no invidious significance.

[2] As late as the beginning of the Victorian Era, a humourist meant what we should call a crank.

the Indians; the reason is clear—I have bribed 'em. I have bought the Proprietors in like manner, and also their most gracious Majesties, with my Lords Mansfield and Stormont, my respectable friend the Archbishop of York, and everybody else that ventures to believe me an honest man. Hence you'll perceive that to return poor, from a situation in which I might have amassed wealth by an improper behaviour, is a proof not of innocence, but of guilt."

"Can you jest thus, Hastings," cried his lady, "when the next pacquet from home may announce that your enemies have triumphed?"

"My Marian, I an't so easily moved. My friends have united in the most charming style to entreat that I'll vouchsafe no notice whatever to the machinations of Mr Burke and the rest of the Administration, anticipating a turn of affairs in my favour. Of the worst effect of the hostile rumours—the stimulating Nannah Furneess and Maddajee Scindia to renounce the treaty—they are happily unconscious, as also of the encouragement they afford to Hyder to continue the war. Anderson and his companions will be placed in the most frightful peril by a protracted uncertainty, and I intend authorising him to open any letters for me that may come his way in their transit across India. If the news be good, he may communicate it to Scindia and the Marattas, and gain all the advantage he can; if bad, he must conceal it, and continue to depend upon his own wits for his safety. I can trust him not to emulate the conduct of Mr John Sullivan in Tanjour, who not only opens without permission the despatches of the General and the Admiral, but exercises his own discretion as to forwarding them or not."

"You have no fear of your colleagues, Hastings, at this uncertain juncture?" asked his lady cautiously.

"None, my Marian. I did Macpherson a grave injustice in suspecting him, I'll swear it. Could you but have beheld the letter wrote by him and Wheler to Fort St George during my indisposition! I trust my Lord Macartney will receive a painful shock when he learns their surprise on perusing the nine-and-twenty close folio pages in which he endeavoured to justify his dispute with Sir Eyre Coote, without a single allusion to the

dangers threatening the very existence of his Presidency! Stables, too, though he has a coarse surly air that's repulsive enough, assures me that he was sent out to support me, and is resolved to do it. Then we shall be strengthened by the return of the good old General, than whom nobody is more complacent when I have personal commerce with him, though he becomes testy and suspicious the moment he loses sight of me. Ah! you have not heard, I forgot. The respectable and unfortunate veteran has suffered another apoplectic stroke, and is returning hither to recruit his health. Sir Edward Hughes has obliged him with the *Medea* frigate for the voyage, and he'll trust to return to the Coast after the briefest possible period of repose. He ought to be here early next month."

I could not restrain an exclamation of delight. In a few weeks I should again enjoy the felicity of beholding Maxwell! Mr Hastings turned to me quickly.

"I must ask Mrs Ward's forgiveness for raising her hopes. Mr Maxwell don't return with the Commander-in-Chief, since he has attended Colonel Macleod, who is gone to the Mallabar Coast to take over the conduct of the operations there. I trust his arrival is only temporarily delayed, since the bold diversion commenced in that quarter by Colonel Humberstone and the home reinforcements has already drawn Teepoo Behauder and his army thither, and is confidently expected to have the happiest results. If Mr Maxwell is at length in the way to obtain the recognition so long denied him in the military line, I'm confident Mrs Ward won't grudge his longer absence."

Cruel Mr Hastings! Mrs Ward does grudge it heartily, though forced to do so in silence.

CALCUTTA, *March ye 20th*, 1783.

The cold weather just past has been marked by various changes in our affairs. The disagreeable situation in which Mr Hastings is placed by the resolution of the House of Commons desiring his dismission has been aggravated by the recall of Sir Elijah Impey in obedience to the demand of the same body, which took effect in January, the assigned cause being his acceptance of the presidency of the Sudder Dewanny

Adawlut. So great has been the success of Mr Hastings' scheme for allaying the contention between the civil and the legal power, while assisting the course of justice, that 'tis a common saying in Calcutta that Sir Elijah is punished for the best, (some say the sole good,) action of his career. With that genuine dignity of mind which scorns to repine even at injustice, Sir Elijah made instant preparation to embark with his household on board of the Hon. Co.'s ship *Worcester*, but was constrained to defer his voyage,[1] since the Bay of Bengall is entirely commanded by the French, and no British vessel can quit the river without risk of capture. His friend thus torn from his side, Mr Hastings retains his own uneasy elevation, exhorted not only by his friends, but in a very flattering letter from my Lord Shelburne himself, the head of that Administration which has required his removal, to remain and disregard the efforts made for his destruction! The unremitting assiduity of Mr Anderson, supported by the persistent encouragement of the Governor-General, has at length resulted in the final and complete ratification of the Maratta Treaty, the announcement of which was accorded the honours of a general salute ten days ago. For almost an entire year have the machinations of Mr Hastings' enemies at home succeeded in delaying the execution of this momentous instrument, the French emissary at Poonah incessantly persuading the Maratta administration that the British power in India was on the point of falling into weaker hands.

The operations on the Mallabar Coast have proved extraordinary successful, to my extreme delight—though I don't, as Mr Hastings declares, attribute their success entirely to the presence of Maxwell. Colonel Macleod, whom he was attending in the character of aid-du-camp, reached the coast in November, to find Colonel Humberstone, who had been pressed hard by Teepoo, and had suffered severely from the rains, beleaguered by the Mysorean prince in Ponany.[2] Observing that Colonel Macleod was proceeding immediately to strengthen the place with field-works, the Behauder endeavoured to anticipate him by a pre-

[1] The *Worcester* did not actually sail until December.

[2] Paniani.

cipitate attack, which was repulsed with the bayonet, the loss of the Mysoreans being prodigious. My beloved Maxwell displayed such uncommon gallantry in repelling this assault, (which was made by way of a surprise, so that there was no time for any officer to seek his proper station, but only to take a place with the troops nearest the vicinity of his sleeping-place,) that he has been promoted Captain, the General for once concurring heartily with Mr Hastings. The utmost vigilance was maintained, in the expectation of further attacks, but to the astonishment of the troops, the forces opposed to them were discovered to be diminishing by degrees, and pretty soon the rumour reached them that Hyder Ally was dead, and that Teepoo had withdrawn himself with his army to assert his right to the vacant throne. This extraordinary opportunity was not lost, and our force, strengthened by the arrival of General Matthews, the Bombay Commander-in-Chief, with a considerable body of troops, assumed the offensive.

General Matthews, who now holds the command, proceeded at first with a good deal of caution, and having captured the port of Rajahmundroog, was about to make his rear secure by reducing the remainder of the coast region, when he received peremptory orders from Bombay to abandon all other operations, and make an immediate push to obtain possession of Bednore. When Mr Hastings heard this, he shook his head, observing that the Bombay Committee had not yet learnt to leave the military business to the military gentlemen, but the result appears satisfactory on this occasion, since by the last advices the General was at the summit of the Gauts, having captured the strong fortress of Hydergur, thus opening the way to Bednore. Maxwell was not with the army at this point, having received a severe wound at the capture of Fort Onore, which was the first operation undertaken by General Matthews and Colonel Macleod in company, and being left behind in that place with others who were sick, under command of Captain Torriano. I have had the pleasure to receive a letter dictated by him, and couched in the most cheerful style, though resenting bitterly his enforced absence from duty, in which I can't agree with him. Though I never dare confess it to himself,

I'll confide to this sheet of paper my satisfaction that having done enough for honour, he is safe for the present. I am ashamed of this now I have wrote it, but it shall stand, to show Maxwell in the future how pusillanimous a wife he will have.

Our affairs in the Carnatic have not shared in the success which has crowned our efforts in Mallabar, the authorities there piquing themselves far more on displaying their independence of the supreme government than on bringing the war to a conclusion. Their strongest desires gratified by the enforced departure of Sir Eyre Coote, my Lord Macartney and his Committee signalised their enfranchisement by the destruction of the three fortresses of Negapatam, Carangoly and Wandiwash, names which are bound up with so many glorious pages in our history, for fear they might tempt afresh the cupidity of Hyder. Not content with intimating to the Mysorean prince in the most abject manner their desire for peace, with the result that his assumed contempt for our nation could hardly fail to become genuine, they endeavoured to make it impossible to continue the war. The vessels laden with rice, which Mr Hastings had despatched to the relief of the famine-stricken inhabitants of Madras, were placed by Lord Macartney under an embargo, by which the grain was forbid to be landed or sold. While the ships were lying off the place, a terrible hurricane arose, and the starving population beheld the food designed for them irretrievably swept away. Undiscouraged in his humane designs, Mr Hastings despatched a second fleet, a large portion of which had the misfortune to fall into the hands of Mons. Souffrein. The small quantity of grain which ultimately reached Madras proved totally inadequate to satisfy the requirements of the starving people, although many thousands had been deported to the more northern territories where the famine was not so severe, and by the latest advices dead bodies to the number of a hundred a day are discovered lying in the streets and on the glacis of the fort, principally those of the unhappy refugees from the regions desolated by Hyder.

Worst of all was the inaction which cast away the tremendous opportunity afforded by the death of Hyder. That prince expired early in December of a terrible boil or carbuncle, which

had caused him the acutest anguish, and his death was kept secret by his advisers on account of the absence in Mallabar of Teepoo Behauder. Intelligence of the event was, however, conveyed to Madras before it was known in the Mysorean camp, and the chance offered for a decisive blow. Teepoo and his army at a distance, the Mysoreans paralyzed by the sickness of their ruler, and confusion reigning in their camp, owing to the anticipations of a conflict for the succession between Teepoo and his brother—here was the opportunity for a resolute government. But my Lord Macartney's usage of Sir Eyre Coote was avenged by the behaviour of his own Commander-in-Chief, General Stewart, who refused to credit the news of Hyder's death, and declined to move. When at length he took the field, the opportunity was lost, and the campaign now proceeding, of which Lord Macartney claims the direction, is of the most ineffective character. A favourable crisis, undivided authority, an increased army and liberal supplies, have furnished to the noble lord nothing but the notion of destroying three of his own fortresses.

This miserable result has stimulated once more the failing spirit of the ill-used veteran who was believed by all to be returned hither to die. The lofty courage which animates the broken frame of Sir Eyre Coote has impelled him to cast himself again into the breach, and Mr Hastings, compassionating while he admires the fervour of his resolve, has assisted him in carrying it into execution. Not content with collecting together from every quarter a sufficiency of cash to make up five lacks for the General to carry with him, (the treasury is already in debt to the amount of eighty lacks,) he has indited an affecting epistle to a member of the Madras Committee who is one of his personal friends, entreating his good offices to soften the animosities prevailing between the parties, and even to lend Sir Eyre Coote his support if possible. Attended by Lady Coote, (who declined to permit her venerable husband to deprive himself of her care,), the ladies of her party and the gentlemen of his family, the General has this morning left Calcutta, proceeding down the river to take his passage to Madras in the Company's armed ship *Resolution*, carrying with him the prayers and good wishes of the entire community.

BELVIDERE-HOUSE, ALLYPORE, *May ye 8th.*

Alas! what a succession of sorrows has been communicated to our apprehension by the despatches which reached Calcutta yesterday! Nothing was less expected, for the reports from Mallabar have hitherto been of the most brilliant complexion. General Matthews, having forced the pass of Hussenghurry, captured first the fortress of Bednore and then that of Anantpoor, the former place surrendering with such a lack of resistance that the General could only ascribe his success to an actual divine interposition. This fortress being one of the grand magazines of the Mysoreans, a great treasure was discovered in it, amounting to a million pounds in gold, besides jewels, and this appears to have been a contributing cause of the misfortunes that have since occurred. The officers demanding a division of the spoil, General Matthews refused this, but not, as is believed, on the safe ground of its belonging to the Government, since he is charged with immediately securing and removing a considerable portion for himself. Vastly discontented, Colonels Macleod and Humberstone repaired to Bombay to represent the General's conduct there, the army remaining dispersed in a number of small forts in all parts of the conquered territory, which they did not so much as take the trouble to place in repair, dreaming of nothing so little as the appearance of an enemy, their minds busied with the sums which were to be distributed among them on the officers' return. Of the disastrous consequences of this security we learned yesterday night from the lips of Mr Hastings, who returned from Council as the messenger of evil.

"My Marian," he said, entering his lady's dressing-room, "I am Job bringing the tidings of his own disasters. Is your compassion exhausted, or have you still patience to listen to the relation of a man whose misfortunes appear to be unending?"

"If it will ease your mind, Hastings, tell me these new sorrows; but won't you rather cast them aside for the moment?"

"It's impossible. Moreover, there's one here who has a stronger concern in them than you or I, and that's Mrs Ward. Ma'am, our period of success in Mallabar is abruptly terminated. Teepoo appeared at the summit of the Gauts in March, forced

the Hydernuggur Pass, and is investing Bednore, while detachments from his army are assailing the scattered forts. Ciddapore is fallen, and Cundapore evacuated, the garrison seeking refuge at Onore, which place appears likely to present the one redeeming feature in this unhappy business. I understand that Captain Torriano received orders from Bednore to evacuate the place, destroying all the grain and stores assembled there for the use of the army, but refused, preferring to defend it, as he said, with fifty soldiers and such recruits as he could raise among the inhabitants. 'Twill be for Captain Maxwell's honour that he's with him there, and not with the main army. General Matthews is said to have secured over thirty lacks for himself out of the Bednore treasury before the siege began, sending it safely to Goa by his brother, and Humberstone and Macleod are at Bombay complaining of him, instead of at the head of their troops. Upon my soul, I wish some magician would instruct me in a method of destroying all the treasure in a fortress before our troops enter it! Its mere presence appears to have the power of instilling avarice, contention, even cowardice, into their minds, and of converting the most elevated characters into criminals."

"Is Onore besieged, sir?" I ventured to ask.

"Not yet, ma'am, but it will be—I don't dare deceive you. Bednore must fall, unless the Bombay Committee can create out of nothing reinforcements for its relief, and then Teepoo's army will be free to assail both Onore and Mangulore. These two towns have better prospects of safety, from being on the coast, and trust me, we'll spare no pains to ensure it them."

"And sure the General will arrange a diversion in the Carnatic, which will draw Teepoo's army thither," says Mrs Hastings.

"My Marian, like Job again, my worst news is the last. We have lost the General."

"Sir Eyre Coote is dead?" we cried together.

"Most unhappily, yes. From Balasore Roads the *Resolution* was subjected to a chace by the four prime sailers of the French fleet—two line-of-battle ships and two frigates, which pursued her for five days, almost as far as Trincomalay. The intense

anxiety of our valuable friend, who knew his own consequence and the benefit the enemy would reap if they captured him—his lady also on board, and the money destined for the payment of the army—proved intolerable to his shattered frame. Refusing to quit the poop, he watched with painful concern the varying fortunes of the chace, but on the third day nature proved incapable of the prolonged strain, and he fell to the deck, struck with a paralytic seizure. His indomitable spirit still sustained him, receiving encouragement from the tidings that the French had resigned the pursuit, and the vessel making the shortest course to Madras, he reached that place alive. The faculty even gave hopes of his complete reinstatement, but two days later, worn down by fatigue both of body and mind, he resigned his breath, his latest moments remarkably placid and serene. Never has there departed a truer martyr to the public cause!"

"Alas, poor Lady Coote!" cried Mrs Hastings. "How will she endure this blow?"

"Poor Carnatic! poor army! poor Britain!" cried the Governor-General, with an extreme bitterness. "Stewart is marching to Cuddalore at the rate of three miles a day, but my Lord Macartney, while exchanging sarcasms with him, finds time to greet the unfortunate, the heroic Coote, on his arrival, with a letter conceived in such terms of disrespect, of insult, as I have rarely seen equalled. His lady and the gentlemen of his family had the resolution to conceal the missive from the expiring veteran, which has preserved the Madras Committee from the guilt of murder, for to a person of his delicate and irritable feelings its production must have had dangerous consequences even in health, and at such a crisis—! But they have heaped their last insults upon him, and I thank Heaven that my grief at his irreparable loss an't embittered by any such remorse. He himself, when his mind was not excited against me by prejudice, would always acknowledge that I did him even more than justice, and I have spared no pains to support him in his arduous task. Heavens! that I were dictator for six months, to end this war and crush the power of Teepoo, though an ungrateful country should ruin me for it after!"

BELVIDERE-HOUSE, *August ye 28th.*

Our misfortunes continue. Bednore, defended by its brave, if avaricious General, until it was no more than a heap of ruins, fell early in May, and Onore and Mangulore have been besieged since that date. In both cases the brave defenders are continually tempted by the most liberal offers, as well as assailed by the most treacherous devices, to induce them to surrender their charge, but maintain a resolved front, in spite of the most frightful sufferings from hunger and disease, and losses by death and desertion. But I can't write on this topic. Oh, Maxwell, I suffer equally with you, though so far removed!

In the Carnatic, General Stewart is laboriously besieging Mons. Bussy in Cuddalore, having gained one considerable advantage in the capture of the enemy's outposts, but with a terrible loss, while Sir Edward Hughes and Monsieur Souffrein carry on an indecisive warfare by sea, in which the balance of success remains on the whole with our adversaries. The news from Owd is disappointing in the extreme, the Nabob-Vizier still delaying his promised payments and asserting inability. The stringent order of the Court of Directors has brought about the replacement of Mr Middleton by the former agent, Mr Bristow, but with no advantage to anybody, the Begums continuing to allege their incapacity to pay the sums demanded of them, and exposing the women and children of the late Nabob, who are in their care, to something very near starvation, (if I may use the odd word,) in order to prove it. Early this year, Mr Hastings was shocked to learn that the Princesses' two ministers were being subjected to considerable restraints and privations to extort from them their unlawful gains, and ordered their immediate release. He is unremitting in his efforts to remove the burdens pressing upon the province, and reduce it to order, but so perpetually is he thwarted by his colleagues and by the agents forced upon him, that the unhappy Azoph-ool-Dowlah, despairing of finding his patron's power to help equal to his will, threatens to leave his principality to itself, and come to live at Calcutta with his revered Umaud-ool-Moolk, as the Moors style Mr Hastings, meaning the Prop of the State.

"Thwarted by his colleagues," I said, for, emboldened by the perpetual cavilling of the Court of Directors, who want the courage to recall Mr Hastings, but don't scruple to annoy him in every conceivable way, the remainder of the Council maintain an attitude of continual opposition. Mr Macpherson has thrown off his mask, and justified the suspicion conceived of him by Mr Hastings a year ago, devoting himself, with the sweetest air in the world, to stimulate the sullen and boorish disposition of Mr Stables to an insolent vehemence, and the two in combination intimidate poor Mr Wheler, who hates them cordially, into supporting all their extravagancies. Assailed in the most dishonourable manner at his own Council-board, as well as in letters home, it is only extraordinary that Mr Hastings has not thrown up his post in disgust, but he still longs to see the conclusion of the Carnatic War and the overthrow of the Mysorean power.

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I had wrote thus far before supper, little guessing to what a depth of infamy the malice of these two gentlemen was to lead them, so that, purely in the hope of inflicting pain on Mr Hastings, they could descend to circulate a vile calumny attacking the honour of the most innocent and deserving of men. The company to supper included Mess. Macpherson and Stables, (Mr Wheler being gone up the river for his health,) Mr Justice Hyde, and Mr Grand, who is now Collector of Tirhoot, in the province of Behar. The meal concluded, the gentlemen, on the invitation of Mr Hastings, who does not himself smoke, called for their houccas, and the apartment in which we were assembled, which is open on one side to the gardens, was quickly filled with the perfumed vapours generated by these instruments, to which Mrs Hastings and I, like all Calcutta ladies, are well habituated. In the course of conversation Mr Hastings recalled the memory of Mr Grand to a great column of stone surmounted with a lion, which is to be seen at Hajeepoore, a town in his district, and is considered by the learned to have been erected by the enterprise of King Porus, being covered with inscriptions impossible to be deciphered even by the most ingenious *pundits* of Tirhoot. This pillar, which is called by the

Indians Raja Beemsing's Lattee or Walking-stick, Mr Hastings proposed fetching to Calcutta, and setting it up afresh as a monument to Sir Eyre Coote.

"Indeed, sir," says Mr Grand, somewhat staggered, as I could see, with the magnitude of the scheme, "the General could have no nobler memorial. But the difficulty of moving it would be prodigious."

"Pho!" says Mr Hastings; "bring it on truckles to the banks of the Gunduck, and thence float it down by means of a raft into the Ganges, and so to Calcutta. I can't rest until there's an adequate monument commemorating our deceased friend in some public place—the Esplanade would please me best—so that every child in Calcutta may be made acquainted with his virtues."

"You won't seek to acquaint 'em of his faults, sir, I presume?" cried Mr Stables, with the air of rude familiarity that he assumes in company. "You'd questionless find that an easier task, though it might require a larger tablet."

"A dead man has no faults, sir," said Mr Hastings.

"Oho, sir, you're very forgiving, I'm sure! I've seen letters of Sir Eyre Coote's to the Council reflecting most injuriously on Mr Hastings."

"My dear sir," says Mr Macpherson, with the most exquisite softness, "will you quarrel with Mr Hastings if he admit, though late, the justice of the General's observations?"

"No man," said Mr Hastings, with emotion, "has borne more from the General than I, but these injuries are buried in his tomb. Faults he possessed, for we are all mortal, but will anybody be so base as to recall them now?"

"I' faith, one can't forget 'em," cried Mr Justice Hyde. "Talk of Matthews, seized on his capitulation with his palanqueen full of concealed pagodas—Sir Eyre Coote would have stuffed his pockets as well."

"'Tis said he never paid his spies sufficiently," said Mr Macpherson, "so they found a second paymaster in Hyder, and betrayed all the General's designs to him."

"Gentlemen, pardon me if I say that these recollections are unseasonable," said Mr Hastings. "I trust that in my house

the name of our great and good friend will never be mentioned but with respect."

"At least, the General never accepted money to betray his country," says Mr Stables, in so marked a style that all observed it.

"Pray, sir, is that a distinction in a British officer?" asked Mr Macpherson.

"Why, indeed, we may say it is, since a gentleman who has enjoyed the countenance of the Governor-General is guilty of the crime."

"Sir," said Mr Hastings, "I have not the honour to understand you."

"You an't aware, then, sir, that your late Persian secretary has deserted from Fort Onore, and carried to the besiegers there the news of the straits to which the garrison is reduced? No offence, ma'am, I hope?" for I had sprung from my chair. Mr Hastings took my hand paternally in his.

"Calm yourself, ma'am; there's some mistake. Mr Stables will be the first to apologize when he sees the pain he has caused. 'Tis true there was one British officer base enough to abandon his comrades and betray their situation, but his name was Sool,[1] so said the hircarra who brought the news to Bombay—which I take to be Sewell."

"No, sir," cried Mr Stables violently, "Sool or Macsool, if you please. An't that the blackfellows' rendering of Maxwell, pray? I appeal to Mr Justice Hyde if it an't as I say?"

"Mr Hyde's information, extensive as it is, can hardly cover the affairs of Mallabar," said Mr Hastings, very calmly.

"Indeed, sir," cried the Judge, "in this case I may say without boasting that it does. Mr Macpherson spoke of spies a minute ago, and I know something about them." Like Mr Burke, Mr Justice Hyde is a humourist, and his humour is that the Presidency is filled with French spies, though the persons arrested at his order are constantly discharged for lack of evidence. "There's a person in whom I repose complete confidence—son to a former officer of our army, though country-

[1] The name of the officer who deserted from Onore during the siege has not been preserved.

born—who has often sent me valuable information, enabling me to trace the traitors lurking in our midst, and he forwarded me this news. A connection of his, nominally in service with Teepoo, but really acting in our interest, had communicated it to him, adding that he had seen Captain Maxwell being sent off to Seringapatam along with the Bednore prisoners, so that his treachery had not met with the reward it anticipated."

"Sir—dear sir!" I gasped, catching at Mr Hastings' arm; "say you don't credit it. It an't true!"

"Were the whole world united in asserting it, there are two persons here, Mrs Ward and myself, who would declare Captain Maxwell incapable of an action even the most remotely treacherous," he assured them.

"Sure Mr Macpherson will make a third?" I cried. "You're acquainted with Captain Maxwell, sir; you know this tale is false."

"I hope I would never judge anybody harshly, ma'am," the creature replied. "If the gentleman have acted as is reported of him, be sure I'll eternally maintain that his temptations must have been excessive."

I turned from him with indignation. "You sit here," I cried to the others, "and assail the reputation of an honourable man on the word of a spy. I can pretend no doubt as to Mr Justice Hyde's informant—" a light breaking upon me. "Pray, sir, an't he Mr Alexander Haines? I knew it! the malice coupled with the baseness of the accusation betrays its author. He is himself a French spy, and I can prove it——"

"My Hester, you are over-agitated," said Mrs Hastings, rising and approaching me. "An't it enough to accuse your own cousin of this infamy, without enlarging upon its circumstances? Nobody who enjoys Captain Maxwell's acquaintance would credit the charge for an instant, and you would be better employed in beseeching Heaven for his life than in defending him with so much vehemence."

I stood demolished, perceiving how nearly I had betrayed my patroness's confidence, but the significance of her last words returning upon me, I cried out afresh.

"But what am I to believe, ma'am? Is Maxwell indeed

sent to Seringapatam, or is that only a portion of the calumny? Am I to think of him as subjected to those miseries—those cruelties—of which we have trembled to hear? Or is he in a comparative safety at Onore?"

The gentlemen regarded one another in silence. "I fear you'll find the Captain is in Seringapatam, ma'am," says Mr Macpherson at last. "'Twas questionless the seeing him on his way thither that gave occasion for the charge you resent."

"Which was made because he can't defend himself?" I cried. "Oh, how can I live, if this be so? The irons—the privation—the lack of physical skill! What miseries must he now be enduring!"

"Teepoo has acquired a character for humanity to which his father was a stranger," suggested Mr Grand. "There's a universal belief, ma'am, that he'll accord the prisoners better usage."

"But there's no certainty of it!" I cried, weeping. "Not to know where he is—whether dead or alive—or how he does! The uncertainty will kill me."

"Calm yourself, ma'am," said Mr Hastings, with an impressive solemnity. "Remember the case of the prisoners taken with Baillie—that their friends have endured this uncertainty for three years already. Let me not hear Mrs Ward speak of expiring under it. She must live, if only to defend her Maxwell's reputation, and entreat his life of that Providence which has preserved him already through so many dangers. My Marian," he placed my hand in his lady's, "I entrust Mrs Ward to your care. You will recommend to her those pious consolations with which you have so often fortified your husband, and your feminine sympathy will alleviate her distresses. Your sense of the attachment she has displayed to you can now be marked."

Mrs Hastings passed her arm round me, and led me from the room.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A PARTING.

CALCUTTA, *Nov. ye 15th*, 1783.

The uncertainty as to Maxwell's situation continues, and I yet live. Not until the war concludes, and releases those imprisoned at Seringapatam, or beleaguered in Fort Onore, can our anxiety terminate, and of this there's no present prospect. We are at peace with the Marattas, we received two months ago the news of an accommodation with the French, even our protracted contention with the American rebels is at length concluded—in their favour, but there is no peace with the tyrant of Mysore. How sadly, how painfully, did our hopes deceive us when we credited the general report that Teepoo was of a less sanguinary disposition than his merciless parent! No certain intelligence can reach us from his capital, the scene of such frightful horrors, but there penetrate through secret channels rumours of the most awful character, of prisoners led out and cut to pieces, or menaced with starvation until in despair they partake of the poisoned food which is alone provided them, or worst of all, of youthful officers stupefied with a horrible drug called *majum*, and while in that condition, forcibly converted to the Mossolman creed. At first, when I heard of these atrocious actions, my blood boiled, the tears of indignation and pity flowed freely, but now I seem to myself to have lost all sensibility. I have no tears left, not a feeling that is not deadened by these perpetual shocks. One recollection alone still stirs in me a thrill of anger, the action of Mons. Souffrein in handing over to the Mysoreans all the British prisoners in his hands, the most of them midshipmen and other young boys taken out of the ships he had captured, and this while the prisoners captured by our vessels from the French were receiving the kindest usage and the most distinguished consideration in Bengall. In thinking of that commander, I forget that I am a Christian, and feel that I could stab him to the heart with the nearest weapon that offered.

Alas, alas! can these few months—as they are in reality—of anxiety have availed to change the whole cast of my disposition? What would—nay, I will admit no doubt—what will Maxwell feel when he discovers the creature he favoured with his affection so sadly altered, a horrid thirst for vengeance taking the place of more pious sentiments? And how severely will he blame her for the neglect and indifference she has betrayed towards the concerns of those who should have demanded her most constant attachment and attention! Not that I have withdrawn myself from my duties, but I have performed them in a mechanical style, my mind so set upon its own objects that the concerns of others have been forgot. Observing my duty more faithfully, I might even have enjoyed some alleviation of my own sorrows, but it has been left for this day to remind me that misfortune an't the lot of Hester Ward alone.

Repairing this morning to Mrs Hastings' dressing room, to assist her in her toilet, I encountered Mr Hastings in the anteroom, his whole visage expressive of the most extreme emotion.

"You'll find Mrs Hastings sadly demolished," he said to me. "I have just acquainted her of my resolution to send her home in January."

"Dear sir, you an't serious?" I cried. "Mrs Hastings to go home alone?"

"Is the topic such as to provoke a jest, ma'am? I am like a man who compasses laboriously his own absolute misery."

I put my hand to my head, remembering that I had heard six months ago from one of the gentlemen of a persistent report to the effect that Mr Hastings had requested of the Court of Directors to nominate his successor, intending to return to England this season, but the course of public affairs appearing to place this out of the question, the matter seemed to have been forgotten.

"You don't design returning yourself, then, sir?" I faultered.

"I had intended it, ma'am, but circumstances forbid. My employers give no sign, though my despatches by the *Surprize* must have reached them in ample time to allow of a reply overland. But that an't my sole reason, for having given them due

notice of my intention to resign my place, I should feel myself at liberty to do so, though my successor were not arrived. But the two wretched princes—the Nabob-Vizier and the Nabob of Arcott—who hang upon my protection, I can't abandon to the tender mercies of my associates. I am convinced that were I out of the way, Mr Macpherson would observe no bounds with the Nabob-Vizier, who is already reduced to distraction by the frantic misconduct of Mr Bristow, while my Lord Macartney would hand over Wallah Jah to Teepoo as a peace-offering, and sweep his revenues into the Madras coffers. I am conscious of a melancholy responsibility for the case of these two unfortunates, having assisted to bring them under our sway at a time when I cherished some confidence in the good faith of my colleagues, and as a gentleman, I can't bring myself to forsake them in this hopeless situation. I shall delay my departure for another year, expecting no credit for the sacrifice, since there's few will consider it a sacrifice at all, but satisfied that duty demands it."

"Indeed, dear sir, the resolve does you the utmost honour," I cried. "But won't Mrs Hastings prefer to make the sacrifice with you?"

Mr Hastings turned upon me a glance of mild reproof. "She would prefer it, but I decline to permit it," he said. "I have been warned on every side that another season here may prove fatal to her. True, she was not afflicted during the late rains with any severe attack, but I fear that was owing rather to the weakness than the strength of her constitution, and I have been daily alarmed by the symptoms of her debility. Sir Elijah, in his outspoken way, was the last to point out to me the remorse with which I should be loaded did she remain and fall a sacrifice to my selfishness. But what made my decision irrevocable was the recollection of her own affecting words on the death of the venerable Mrs Chambers last year. 'Ah, poor lady!' she said; 'she staid a year too long.' Taken with Sir Elijah's warning, they stung me to a fixed resolution."

"Dear sir, what consolation can I offer you? At least Mrs Hastings herself recognises your wisdom and bows to it."

"She was tolerably reconciled to it when I left her, but I fear her reluctance will quickly return. Pray, ma'am, assist her to

keep up her spirits. I am about to enter into the arrangements for her passage immediately, that she—and alas! myself also—may be convinced there's no drawing back."

Unable to speak, lest the compassion which filled my heart should overflow in tears, I passed on into the dressing-room, and discovered Mrs Hastings, wearing a powdering-gown, seated before the great cabinet in which she keeps the greater part of her jewels. Her eyes were swollen, and her countenance disfigured with weeping, but she turned to me with an air of unconcern, and spoke quickly. "You have heard of this new resolution, Hessy? It's not for us to quarrel with it, if it commends itself to Mr Hastings, and I trust to be able to turn it to his advantage. We will effect great things for him in England in the year between our arrival and his."

"Ma'am!" I ventured to interpose, terrified, but my patroness continued,

"Major Scott has done tolerable well for him, but I an't thoroughly satisfied with Scott. There's a poor-spiritedness about him, for all his bustling activity, and I know Mr Hastings considers he has made him appear too much in the character of a penitent, a suppliant. But were Mr Hastings himself to return, the natural amiability of his temper would set him agreeing with all his enemies and submitting to all sorts of slights forthwith. He would comport himself with all that unobtrusive dignity which distinguishes him, forbidding him to demand any right that an't universally pressed upon him. Within six months he would be retired to an elegant country life and a select literary circle, preferring obscurity to the necessity of pushing himself forward to obtain recognition. Now we will put all that out of the question. The polite world, observing Mrs Hastings make a figure as a woman of fashion, decorated with all those tributes which her husband's affection, or the respectful veneration of the country powers, have showered upon her, will conceive a juster notion of the consequence of Mr Hastings, and be prepared to welcome him with a suitable deference. As to the parliamentary world, with them, my dear Hessy, these arguments will be even more powerful—" she held up a necklace of the most magnificent diamonds and the ear-rings

which match it. "What shall I carry on my neck and in my ears, Hessy? Not diamonds only—*votes*, child, divisions in the House."

"But you don't design to offer bribes, ma'am?"

"Pho! you use such ugly words. Diamonds are valuable, they make also elegant presents. A pin to a Member of Parliament, a bracelet to his lady—I neither offer nor give a bribe, I do but show that Mrs Hastings an't devoid of gratitude to those that acknowledge the merits of her husband. But if I never gave away so much as a seed-pearl, the mere display and possession of such stones would render me a person of consequence. I must conquer England in the interest of Mr Hastings, before he sets foot on the shore, for no man will fill so well an elevated situation, provided he has not to obtain it for himself. His Majesty is most graciously disposed—so Scott assures us perpetually, the Queen has received with affability the gift I entrusted him for her, and I have an ally in her household in the person of my old friend Madam Schwellenberg, the keeper of the robes. We are sure of the Court, Hester, and we shall have the countenance of the most respectable characters outside it, Mr Markham's father the Archbishop, my Lords Mansfield and Stormont and the rest, but it's the other party we have to conciliate. We must bend all our powers to their conquest, you and I——"

"Oh, ma'am!" I cried, enabled at last to interrupt her by this actual mention of myself; "sure you forget. Your Hester won't be with you."

"Not with me!" she cried. "And why not? Of course you will be with me."

"But Maxwell, ma'am," I stammered. "I can't quit India——"

"He'll follow you as soon as he's released, and marry you in England."

"But in what condition is he likely to be released, ma'am, after so many months of cruel imprisonment? and what would be his feelings when he discovered that I had abandoned him? And you'll remember also that cruel slander of Mr Stables'. He has muttered it to all Calcutta by this time, and everybody

waits to hear Maxwell justify himself. What would be the common thought if I anticipated his release by returning to England? Questionless that I believed the charge, and feared to face the disgrace that must result."

"Mr Hastings will care for Maxwell's reputation, and to my mind you'll show your confidence best by leaving him unsupported."

"Pardon me, ma'am; I'll face the issue at his side, whatever it be."

"You'll prefer your Maxwell to me—to me?"

"Oh, ma'am, forgive me!" I cried, deeply moved; "but any lady in the settlement would be honoured by attending you. He has none but myself."

"Any lady! A stranger, or what's worse, an acquaintance, and in your place, who have lived with me six years! All the miseries and perils of the voyage! can you condemn me to them, Hester, without the solace of the company of a female friend?"

I could answer only with a sob, and Mrs Hastings lowered her voice. "Hessy, I have a secret to tell you. You know Mr Hastings' extreme tenderness for children—you have heard from others of his bitter grief in the loss of the two infants, the offspring of his former marriage? I hardly dare confide it even to you, that I have a hope—there's a remote prospect—that I may yet confer upon him that crowning joy, the absence of which has proved so great a disappointment to him, though it has never drawn the faintest murmur from his lips. I haven't ventured even to whisper it to him yet, lest I should excite his mind by a baseless hope, but if I could hint it to him before our departure, or write it from the Cape, so that the news might reach him when he was most bitterly feeling his solitude, what a consolation would it impart! Now, Hessy—will you suffer me to sail alone now?"

"Oh, dearest madam," I sobbed, "you wring my heart! Place yourself for one moment in my situation, and Mr Hastings in Maxwell's——"

"You are too fond of these comparisons, Hester. I take them as a great liberty on your part. But I see you're unmoved in your monstrous design. For the sake of this young

man, of whose very existence you were ignorant five years ago, you are prepared to forsake me, who rescued you— No, I won't lower myself by recounting the claims I have on your gratitude. You have forgot them, and it an't for me to recall them."

After a brief pause for an answer, which I was totally incapable of offering, my patroness turned from me with an air of the most displeased coldness, and disdaining to address me further, herself summoned the black women, and proceeded with her toilet, while I remained in my corner, plunged in an excess of grief. Now I desired to throw myself at Mrs Hastings' feet, and cry out that I would attend her to New Holland if she demanded it, and again the idea of the unfortunate Maxwell, emerging sick and helpless from his captivity, to find himself heartlessly abandoned by the being who had sworn to await his return, restrained me. The black women looked round curiously on hearing the sobs which I could not repress, but my patroness vouchsafed me not the smallest notice. When her gown was on, I ventured to approach her to pin her handkerchief, which is always my business, but she waved me back with such an air of displeasure that the pins fell from my trembling fingers to the floor, and knotting the handkerchief carelessly with her own hands, turned to leave the room.

"Oh, dearest madam!" I cried, in a voice half-choked with sobs, as I catched at her gown to detain her, with some wild notion of entreating leave to attend her to Madras, or even to the Cape, and thence return to await my poor Maxwell, but she drew the folds out of my clasp.

"Oblige me by ceasing these transports," she said, and passed on into the anteroom, there to meet Mr Hastings, who had questionless returned to discover the reason for our late appearance at breakfast.

"My Marian, don't you design to honour us this morning?" he enquired, with some vivacity, for he grudges to an extraordinary degree any meal not presided over by his lady, but perceiving our discomposed countenances, he set himself immediately to restore tranquillity between us. "My dearest, and you also, Mrs Ward, what new trouble is this?"

"We had forgot that Mrs Ward has other concerns which will forbid her attending me to Europe," Mrs Hastings replied.

"Now a curse on my thoughtlessness!" cried Mr Hastings. "To be sure we had forgot it, or rather, I had, and was comforting myself with the fancy that my Marian would enjoy Mrs Ward's company and care. But she had not forgot it, I'll swear, for she has too much thought for others—and she should have rebuked my carelessness, instead of encreasing her own sorrows by adding to those of her amiable friend. How easily can I picture the generous contest—my Marian refusing her friend's attendance, Mrs Ward insisting on affording it—each only anxious to oblige the other! But I'll do penance for my neglect, indeed, my dearest, and provide you with a companion who will take, so far as is possible, the place of your attentive Mrs Ward, while leaving her to devote herself with a clear conscience to the cause of the heroic, the unfortunate Maxwell."

"Oh, dear sir, you are too good!" I cried.

"How, ma'am! do you question my power or my will? You have indeed a right to doubt me, after my criminal neglect, but now it's brought home to me, won't you allow me the disposition to amend? Mrs Hastings has taught me to know her sex too well to believe that anything less than so old and assured a friendship could make you dream of abandoning Maxwell, nor could anything induce me to conceive her willing to accept the sacrifice. The matter, then, falls to me to adjust without wounding the punctilio of either."

"Oh, sir, I can't let you continue to think of me so much better than I deserve!" I cried. "I refused even to contemplate attending Mrs Hastings."

"Hester, I won't be outdone in sincerity by you," said Mrs Hastings, giving me a pat. "I ordered her to attend me, Hastings, and heaped reproaches on her because she urged the superior claims of her Maxwell. Now what have you to say of the two paragons you have been praising?"

"What but that this noble frankness makes them more admirable than ever?" cried Mr Hastings. "Come, my Marian, embrace your Mrs Ward; I insist upon it. The friendship that

can survive so crucial a test as that to which yours has just been exposed, must indeed be eternal."

FRASER HOUSE, CALCUTTA, *Jan. ye 13th*, 1784.

The last two months appear to have fled with a miraculous swiftness, at least to those who have sufficient concern for the Governor-General and Mrs Hastings to share the pain they experienced in their anticipated separation, and that separation is now actually accomplished. Eleven days ago a huge fleet of budgerows quitted Calcutta, having on board all the most respectable characters of the settlement, who designed to pay Mrs Hastings the compliment of attending her on board ship with flags and music. The Governor-General's budgerow leading, the vessels dropped down the river in the most perfect order, the prettiest sight imaginable for the eyes of the lady in whose honour it was intended, the journey ending at Culpee, where the ladies and gentlemen all came on board to offer Mrs Hastings their regrets for her departure and their good wishes for the voyage. The *Atlas*, in which her passage had been taken, was lying at Kedgery, and the river below Culpee being unfit for budgerows, the journey was continued in two vessels belonging to the Pilot Establishment. In the one I was permitted to attend my patroness, until I should resign my care of her to the ever kind and charming Mrs Motte, whom the Governor-General has secured as her companion for the voyage. It's rumoured in Calcutta that in return for this complacency, Mr Hastings has made Mrs Motte a present of five hundred gold mohurs, but this I can't confirm from my own knowledge, though it would only accord with his usual lavish generosity. Mr Motte attended his lady as far as Kedgery, and Mr Hastings and his aid-du-camp completed the party. In the other vessel were the remainder of the Governor-General's family, together with the amiable and unfortunate Mr Cleveland, who is proceeding to the Cape for his health amid every demonstration of sorrow from his simple-minded and affectionate Puharrys, and my kind friends Mr and Mrs Fraser, whose presence had been specially requested on my behalf.

As we approached Kedgery, the strain upon our feelings be-

came almost intolerable. The forced cheerfulness of Mr and Mrs Hastings, each endeavouring to maintain an easy appearance for the sake of the other, drew tears more than once from Mrs Motte and myself, and it was almost a relief, if such a thing can be imagined, when we came in sight of the ship. Everything that uncalculated expenditure, directed by the tenderest attachment, could effect for his lady's comfort, Mr Hastings had done, securing the state cabin and the round-house for her sole use, and a steward to attend upon her, in addition to the two black women. On every side were the evidences of his assiduous solicitude, and I can hardly doubt that considering the huge cost of an ordinary passage home—a thousand pounds for a single cabin—he must have parted with a large share of his fortune to render the voyage easier to her. My harrowing recollections of the actual parting forbid me to describe it, but I have the liveliest remembrance of Mrs Hastings' charging the Governor-General's family, one and all, with the responsibility for his comfort and safety, and Mr Hastings' adjuring Mrs Motte, the Captain and officers of the vessel, and Mess. Cleveland, Phipps and Markham, who are passengers in her, to forward to him by every the slightest opportunity the most minute reports of Mrs Hastings' health and spirits. My beloved patroness bade me farewell with every evidence of the most condescending affection, saying, with that vivacity which never abandons her,

"Tell your Maxwell, Hessy, that I conceived a grudge against him the first time I saw him, and I was right. His offences have steadily encreased, for then he only destroyed my precious porcelain dragon, but now he has deprived me of my Hester." Seeing me overcome with grief, she gave me a slight shake. "I love you well, Hessy, and I bear no malice. You were right in preferring your Maxwell to me, and I trust he'll appreciate your preference as he ought."

Bidding farewell to dear Mrs Motte, and also to poor Mr Cleveland, who was so feeble that it had been necessary to swing him on deck in a chair like the ladies, I retired on board the second sloop, while every preparation for departure was made on board the *Atlas*. While we watched, we beheld the side manned, Mr Hastings emerged from the round-house, made

his adieux to the Captain with his accustomed civility, and descended the ladder. I durst not look at his face, divining the agony he must be enduring. Our two small vessels remained motionless, but the *Atlas* began to glide from her moorings, accompanied by a third pilot-sloop, which attends her for eight or ten days further. The form of Mrs Hastings appeared in the stern balcony, exchanging, so long as her handkerchief or her white gown was discernible, signals with her husband, who stood silent on the poop of his vessel, his eyes fixed on the receding Indiaman. Not until the *Atlas* was beyond mortal vision, even with the utmost straining of the sight, did he give orders for returning, and retire with a heavy step into his cabin. We were three tides making Culpee, and during all that time he remained invisible, suffering, as Dr Francis assured us, with a raging head-ache, but as we translated his words, with a heart almost broken. At Culpee the return to his own budgerow, every object in which reminded him of the beloved being who was each moment further removed from him, plunged him in a fresh access of grief, but when his anxious physician visited us that evening, he was able to announce that he had left the Governor-General engaged in the composition of a letter to his lady, and deriving some comfort from the occupation.

We reached Calcutta last night, and I took up my residence in the abode of my first and dearest friend in this place. The angelic kindness of Mrs Fraser's disposition made itself evident the moment she learned that Mrs Hastings was returning home, in the prompt offer to me of an asylum under her roof. With the delicacy that distinguishes her, she has made my acceptance appear as a favour to herself rather than to me. I can oblige her infinitely, she says, by taking her lovely young daughter Williamina, (named for Mr William Watts, a former chief of the Cossimbuzar factory, who patronised Mr Fraser in his youth,) who comes out from home this season, into company with me, since her bad health prevents her own doing so. I am glad to be able to be of some use to her also in her household economy, leaving her free to devote herself to Mr Fraser, whose disposition has gained much in mildness since his lady's frequent sicknesses aroused in him the apprehension of losing her, but who is apt

to display his affection by demanding the exclusive attention of its object.

With these employments, then, and the hope of proving serviceable to my kind friends, I must endeavour to occupy my mind and thoughts during such further period of suspense as Providence may ordain for me. There appears no question of late of Teepoo's inclination to peace, since he has informed both Scindia and the Marattas of his acquiescence in that article of the treaty of Salboy which bound them either to persuade or enforce his cessation of hostilities, and my Lord Macartney is eager to have the honour of concluding the accommodation with him. I could find it in my heart to be angry with Mr Hastings for the sharpness with which he has interposed difficulties in the way of the Madras Government. I know he is right from a public standpoint, I know it would be a criminal folly to cede portions of the Nabob of Arcott's dominions to Teepoo merely because they *lie convenient* for him, as Lord Macartney puts it, I know the insolent barbarian ought to receive an exemplary chastisement for his cruelties and his repeated breaches of faith, but there are periods when it appears to me that nothing in the world is worth considering save peace and the release of the captives. And that, I can see, Mr Hastings inclines to postpone, for the sake of bringing Teepoo to his knees, since we have now a competent army under Colonel Fullarton on the verge of marching into his paternal dominion of Mysore, and thus creating a diversion that would force him to abandon his conquests in the Carnatic. Alas! it's well for the honour of Britain that affairs of state an't directed by the females whose dearest hopes are at stake in them. How low must she have sunk who is conscious of a secret guilty satisfaction in the famine that now threatens our dominions, since it must render the Governor-General chary of embarking on a fresh campaign! The failure of the rains throughout the Central and Western parts of Indostan has produced the most frightful scarcity from beyond Lahore as far as the Carrumnassa. Our own province of Behar has suffered to a less degree, and though Bengall is enjoying a singular plenty, there's a constant apprehension for the future. To prevent the raising of the price of grain by artificial means,

Mr Hastings has introduced measures for regulating its distribution, and devised a scheme for assembling huge quantities of corn in great buildings hermetically sealed, to be sold to the poor in years of scarcity. All must admire this humane thought; to Hester Ward alone does the costliness of carrying it into effect afford occasion for a trembling joy

CALCUTTA, *Jan. ye 21st.*

This frightful suspense still continues. Two days ago, on the occasion of the masquerade which took place the evening of the Queen's Birthday, (there was no public ball given, but not a murmur was heard, every soul in the community understanding that the Governor-General, unfortified by his lady's presence, was not in spirits sufficient to carry him through such a solemnity,) Mr Hastings sought me out to inform me of the truth of the rumour that negociations for peace were actually in progress. Two commissioners, Mr Sadlier, the second member of the Madras Council, and Mr Staunton, private secretary to my Lord Macartney, had been despatched to treat with Teepoo, and were expected to arrive in his capital by Christmas Day, while an armistice had been proclaimed, and Colonel Fullarton ordered to withdraw his force within the limits of the Company's own possessions.

"I don't tell Mrs Ward this because it pleases me, but because I know it will please her," says Mr Hastings; "and yet, even for her own sake I would recommend her to prefer a more independent posture on our side. To withdraw our troops before ascertaining that the Sultan has done the same is to leave ourselves at his mercy, and to cringe and entreat for terms, as the Madras Committee have done more than once, is to invite the barbarian to insult us with false hopes. Had Fullarton but remained in Mysore, I should have entertained far livelier anticipations of peace than now."

His tone was so serious that I understood he was warning me against building any confident expectations on the news, and combating vigorously the sick disappointment that assailed me, I asked what news he had received of Mrs Hastings by Mr Doveton, who had arrived in Calcutta four days before, having quitted the *Atlas* at the Heads.

"Why, indeed, he brought me letters that should have satisfied me, from Mrs Motte and Cowper and Phipps," he replied, "though they did but renew my anxieties in spite of their cheerful air. You, who know the acuteness of Mrs Hastings' feelings, and the inability of her frame to support them, will understand me. A voyage of such monstrous length, and a constitution so enfeebled as hers! But I won't despond. In another fortnight I shall receive fresh news of her from the returning pilot, and I trust it will assure me she's in tolerable health and spirits."

"There are some persons would grudge the absent any sentiments but those of the most extreme grief, sir," said I.

"Then I an't one of them, ma'am. Heavens! to be assured that she was cheerful! 'twould go far to make me cheerful myself, impossible though that be. The sole employment that can render me even easy in mind is the preparing to follow her. I quitted Allypore for ever this morning. Only the desire to oblige the amiable Lady D'Oyly by entertaining her there could have drawn me thither for the Sunday. At every sound I look up for the entrance of her who has adorned and blessed the house so long, and am disappointed. Why, ma'am, when we were returning to Culpee, that day, I could have sworn she stood beside me, and passed her hand gently over my aching head, and addressed me in her own sweet accents. The bliss—the agony—of that moment! But I am talking wildly. What will Mrs Ward think of me? I should be overwhelmed with confusion did I not know that she could supplement from her own memory all my tenderest recollections."

He quitted my side hastily, leaving me much moved.

CALCUTTA, *Feb. ye 11th.*

The Governor-General has been sadly indisposed, and nobody doubts that the absence from his side of his tender nurse and consoler has intensified his malady. True to the generosity of his nature, he despatched Mr Thompson to-day to make me a visit of apology for his negligence in leaving me so long without any news, and the secretary was able to assure us that

he had left him tolerably recovered, and engaged upon a translate of a Gentoo poem with which he designs to compliment Mrs Hastings. On the 29th of January he had the felicity of receiving a letter in her own hand, brought by the pilot, whose sloop Mrs Hastings had dismissed some three days earlier than was anticipated, in order that it might convey to Calcutta, for burial on land, the body of the unfortunate Mr Cleveland, whose attenuated frame had succumbed, alas! to the trials of the voyage. The decease of this amiable young man has caused the utmost affliction to the poor hill-people, who are absorbed in all the extravagance of sorrow owing to the loss of their benefactor, and the Council has resolved to erect a genteel monument at Boglepore, which may preserve the memory of his virtues to future generations. In answer to my eager questions as to Mrs Hastings' own health, Mr Thompson was able to assure me that she appeared tolerably cheerful, though suffering much from the strong winds which had prevailed, and that she had nothing but good to say of her fellow-passengers.

The news from the Carnatic remains indecisive. The commissioners had reached the camp of Syed Saub, Teepoo's general, at Arnee, by the middle of December, but their further journey was impeded by the prevailing floods. At one period Madras was agitated by a rumour that the prisoners had actually been released, but this was quickly proved false, and I can't but be grateful that it did not reach us here. A difference of opinion was arisen between the embassadors, Mr Sadlier desiring to propitiate Teepoo by surrendering to him forthwith the towns of Onore and Mangulore, which are still gallantly maintained by their defenders, but the opposition of Mr Staunton prevented this piece of complacent folly, and a third commissioner was sent from Madras to assist their deliberations, and obviate a deadlock. And there matters stand, while the prisoners, so rumour declares, are perishing daily. O Lord, how long?

CALCUTTA, *Feb. ye 16th.*

My dear Mrs Fraser and I enjoyed to day the distinguished honour of a visit from Mr Hastings, who arrived in his pal-

anqueen after Council, with his usual *swarry*, to the intense gratification of the Fraser servants. Mrs Fraser excusing herself after the ordinary polite compliments, the Governor-General turned to me with an air which I found inexpressibly affecting.

"I am like poor Harry Mandeville," he said, "and have no pleasure but that of talking of Lady Julia with the ladies who know her. Why is it that nobody will mention Mrs Hastings' name to me but in the common form of civility? Mrs Ward alone, of those who were admitted to an intimacy with her, will indulge me by talking of her as she knew her —to which I could listen for hours—and by listening with applause while I sound her praises. I am ashamed of myself for the unmanly letters I have wrote her, filled with gloomy complaints, and yet Mrs Ward will testify that I was always out of spirits when she was absent. How then can I affect cheerfulness when the distance between us perpetually encreases, and half the globe must separate us for an entire year? Wan't it the greatest of all follies to take so much pains to make her unhappy and myself miserable?"

"Dear sir, you acted solely for Mrs Hastings' benefit," I reminded him. "What joy when she meets you in Britain with recovered health and renewed vigour!"

"But what sort of creature will she meet?" he cried. "Broken in health, bankrupt in fortune—on my honour, ma'am, if I prolonged my stay here beyond next season I should be forced to remain altogether, for want of the money to pay my passage! Will she reproach me with my improvidence? will the recollection of the peevishness, the heedlessness, caused by ill-health, have disgusted her with me when I was not at hand to disperse it by my constant assiduities? will even her benevolence be proof against the disagreeable spectacle of a husband broken by infirmities and destitute of cash?"

"Oh, sir," I cried, "you are seeking to allure me into a defence of Mrs Hastings, so that your own heart may enjoy the pleasure of subscribing to it! You must have answered *No!* to each question even in putting them. Is your lady's affection of so slight a character that any change in person or

fortune should alter it? Has she not proved her constancy by her tender attentions during your first illness?"

"Indeed, yes, and during the sixteen months of almost continual indisposition that followed it and preceded her departure. Do I not know it? and yet it affords me an inexpressible pleasure to be assured of it afresh by Mrs Ward. Pray, ma'am, ascribe my foolishness to ill-health, and wish me less sensibility and greater wisdom. To-morrow I quit Calcutta for the Nabob-Vizier's dominions, as you'll questionless have heard, and I'm glad of it. People have no mercy upon me here, and my gates, though shut, admit suitors like a sieve."

"Indeed, dear sir, I trust you'll return in renewed health, and conscious of a merited success!"

"I have little hope of success, ma'am, going, as I do, from a divided and hostile Council to a country wasted with famine and stripped of all its resources. But for the unfortunate Azoph-ool-Dowlah's affecting confidence in me, so little justified, as he must believe, by past events, I would not make the attempt, but I feel my credit pledged to see him placed in a better situation if it's any way possible. Has Mrs Ward heard that Mr Stables cheers me on my way by intimating that he expects my recall to arrive at any moment? But I am past heeding him, and if in aiding this distressed client I avoid another hot season in Calcutta, which I verily believe would be fatal to me, only my enemies will dream of blame, and to their reproaches I am hardened."

The last few sentences he had uttered in an odd, broken style, his mind recalled, I fancy, from his own affairs to mine, by the expression of my countenance. "Dear sir," I cried, breaking in upon his topic without apology, "have you no news for me?"

He regarded me with compassion. "How is it," he said, "that I am continually forced to demolish those hopes which I would so gladly encourage? There's no news, ma'am, and it's feared at Madras that Teepoo, after his usual fashion, has violated all civilised usages, and seized the persons of the embassadors. Orders have been sent to our commanders in the field to yield no obedience to mandates coming from them, lest they should have been extorted by force, and I understand

it's in contemplation for Colonel Fullarton to march again into Mysore."

I sat stunned by this frightful intelligence, which seemed to imply a fresh campaign of an indefinite duration, and Mr Hastings, observing my misery, endeavoured to reassure me.

"Come, come, ma'am, I'll be shot if I let you despond now, after maintaining an undefeated confidence so long! Rely on it, you'll have Maxwell at your feet sooner than you expect. And when he comes, will Mrs Ward, for my sake, think of pity rather than punctilio, and make the poor fellow happy without delay? I had hoped to do myself the honour of representing her father upon the occasion, but if it arrives in my absence, Mr Wheler will replace me to advantage. Could I speak thus if I gave way to despair? No; and I'll repay Mrs Ward's toleration of my complaints by assuring her of my unabated confidence in Maxwell's safe return to confound his enemies and promote her happiness."

CHAPTER XXIX.

A REUNION.

FRASER-HOUSE, CALCUTTA, *May ye 17th*, 1784.

At length I have the joy to be assured of two things, the knowledge of which would have appeared to me a short time ago to be the highest pitch of happiness attainable to mortals—Maxwell's honour is re-established in the public view, and he himself is among the captives released from the tyrant's dungeons at Seringapatam. How long it may be before I behold him I don't know, and—such is human ingratitude—it seems to me as though all the relief I have experienced is as nothing, in comparison with the intense desire to meet him again, which must remain ungratified for the present. The double assurance for which I longed has but just been granted

me, although Mr Wheler, at the kind request of Mr Hastings, has been most punctual in informing me of every fresh piece of news before it was communicated to the general public. After the Governor-General's departure ensued the most afflicting period imaginable of delay and frustrated hopes. A riot in Teepoo's camp had nearly proved fatal to the commissioners, and perhaps contributed to weaken their resolution, for they ordered the surrender of Onore and Mangulore, so gloriously and stubbornly defended, but no sooner was this completed than the Sultan showed a desire to withdraw from the treaty altogether.

At the end of March we were beset by conflicting rumours, hearing on the one hand that there was no particular hope of peace and that many of the prisoners were dead, and on the other that they were speedily to be released. Early in the following month we learned that the barbarian's demeanour was of so unsatisfactory a character that orders had been given for our army at St Thomas's Mount to take the field again, the cession of Mangulore having stimulated his ordinary arrogance to a monstrous pitch, but on the 12th a *feu de joye* from Fort William announced that peace had been signed on the 11th of March. For two hours, so we are informed, did the Commissioners await Teepoo's pleasure, standing before him as suppliants, supported by the envoys of the Nizam and the Marattas, beseeching him to sign a treaty which imposed upon him no indemnity nor cession of territory, but merely the release within thirty days of all his prisoners!

[Joyful though the consequences of this treaty were to me at the time, no lover of his country can pretend to regard it with any but a disapproving eye, since, the opportunity once lost of crushing the Mysorean potentate when we were in possession of a force ample for the purpose, it required two later wars, with the expenditure of infinite blood and treasure, to subdue him. This ineffective result Mr Hastings saw and would have prevented, but was thwarted by the anxiety of my Lord Macartney to see himself hailed as the peacemaker, and the common persuasion that he would find no support at home in enforcing severe terms.—*Note added in* 1818.]

Even after this, we were agonized by the report that the

tyrant demanded two of our fortresses to be placed in his hands as guarantees before he would execute the treaty, but our anxiety was relieved after two or three weeks by the news that many of the prisoners were already arrived at Vellore, and that more of them survived than had been feared. Last of all, two days ago arrived the correct list of those released, in which with joyful tears I read Maxwell's name, and by the same ship, Captain Torriano's report of the gallant defence of Onore, in which, without any notion that he was clearing of unmerited disgrace the name of an innocent man, he mentions the loss last June of Captain Maxwell, of the family of the late Commander-in-Chief, who in taking part in a sally made for the purpose of spiking the guns in a battery erected by the enemy, reached a point far in advance of the Seapoys, and these refusing to follow him, was struck down and carried off a prisoner before Captain Torriano, who rescued the remainder of the forlorn hope with reinforcements and a field-piece, could reach him. Thus Maxwell is justified before the world, and by the mercy of Providence, I shall yet behold him again. Meanwhile, I must endeavour to concern myself with the affairs of those around me. There's the new church,[1] in which Mrs Hastings took so deep an interest, and of which the foundation was laid a month ago by Mr Wheler, after a public breakfast at the old Court-house, there's the perpetual talking and jesting on the topic of balloons and aerostatick machines, (Williamina has excited the envy of the whole settlement with a *balloon hat* of blue and silver tiffany mounted on wire, which was all the rage in London when she sailed,) and there's the huge excitement of the slaying of two tygers by a hunting-party in the immediate vicinity of Chinchura. It should be easy now to wait in patience and be thankful, but alas! it is not.

On the river near BOGIEPORE, *June ye 28th.*

A fortnight after writing the foregoing page, and desisting, sick at heart, because I could not satisfy my mind with the ordinary concerns of the place when it was occupied with Maxwell alone, I was sitting with my dear Mrs Fraser in her shaded

[1] The present St John's Cathedral.

Chinese parlour. The weather was extraordinary hot, and I think I must have dozed in my chair, for it startled me suddenly to perceive that Williamina was in the room, apparently in the act of making signals to her Mama. Catching my eye fixed upon her, she turned aside and began to trifle with the *gilmils* at the window near her.

"Mr Wheler is here, ma'am," she said.

"Pray bring him in, my love," says Mrs Fraser. "Or does he desire to see me alone?"

Williamina made no answer, but again I saw her eyes seeking those of her Mama.

"No, no!" I cried. "If there's bad news, I'll know the worst. Oh, dear ma'am, let him enter, I entreat you."

"The news an't precisely bad, ma'am," faultered Williamina. "Only—Mr Wheler considered you ought to know that the released captives had met with monstrous unkind usage from the military authorities at Madras. No pay was given them, and their appearance, sick, attenuated and in rags, was so distressing that the private inhabitants there raised a subscription to supply their necessities."

"But why tell me this?" I cried. "Is Captain Maxwell in need of money? Will Mr Wheler assist me to send it him? Why this hesitation?"

"Oh, pray, ma'am, don't let her go!" she cried to her Mama, as I rose to seek Mr Wheler. "He is there with my Papa—they bade me warn her—oh, what can I do?"

Finding this agitation incomprehensible, I was approaching the door when two figures confronted me there—Mr Fraser, a glow of honest sympathy suffusing his weather-beaten countenance, attending no other than Maxwell himself! From that moment there existed for me nobody else in the world. I flew to Maxwell, guided his feeble steps to a chair, placed cushions to support him, clasped his wasted hands, gazed into his emaciated visage, and falling at his side, burst into tears. 'Twas as though my lover was risen from the grave to return to me. He drew me to his breast and embraced me repeatedly, but the violence of our emotions would not suffer us to utter a single word. At length Maxwell found his voice.

"Do I present so horrid a spectacle that my Hester's mild glance don't dare rest upon me?" he enquired.

I raised my streaming eyes to his countenance, and hid them again on his breast. "Oh, Maxwell, are you come back to me too late?" I cried.

"Too late, my dearest life—for what? My Hester should have beheld me when I was carried on board ship at Madras! Why, I am almost recovered. I walked into the house from the palanqueen with no more assistance than Mr Wheler's arm. I am come back to plague my dear girl with a vast amount of disagreeable business—nursing and the like—but not to quit her unless she desire it, Heaven be praised!"

"Captain Maxwell has gained in assurance since we last met," I said, forcing a smile on seeing it was not his humour to be wholly serious.

"Does my Hester grudge me the use of her sweet name? My Hester—I always named her thus to myself, and did she but know how often those two words have given me comfort! Now that I again behold her, however, I can dispense with them if she refuses their use."

"You know I can refuse you nothing, Maxwell," I cried.

"Stay," he said. "If you expose me to such temptation, I shall be in danger of shocking you with my demands. What if my Hester found herself confronted with an entreaty to raise her poor battered Maxwell to the seventh heaven by bestowing herself upon him immediately, instead of requiring him to recover unaided before she'll make him happy?"

"She has said she can refuse him nothing," I murmured, hiding my face.

"Why, then, I'll beg Mrs Fraser to send a hircarra to the Padra at once!" he cried, trying to rise, but I cried out and held him back, at which he affected to reproach me for breaking my promise as soon as he sought to benefit by it. But becoming serious as soon as he perceived how horridly I was confused, he drew a paper from his pocket. "I need not say whose kind thought this is," he said. "When you hear it, you'll cry that but one person in the world could have conceived it. 'Captain Maxwell is recommended to proceed to

Monghyr as soon as possible, to recruit his health. A commodious budgerow will be placed at his disposal—and that of his lady, if she chuse to accompany him—on application to Major Sands. He is desired to take his time on the voyage, in order to derive the utmost benefit from the cool air of the river.' Did ever any other patron confer a favour in so considerate a manner? But the ungrateful client will reject it unless his lady will do him the honour to accompany him."

The end of the matter was—and I am ashamed to write it—that Maxwell obtained his wish, and we were married the next evening by Padra Blanshard in Mrs Fraser's saloon. My kind friend herself was entirely on Maxwell's side, pointing out the risk to his shattered constitution of remaining an hour longer than necessary in the unhealthy air of Calcutta at this season, and she assisted him to over-rule all my objections, and in combination with her amiable Williamina, furnished me with such an abundance of clothes that I could not offer that ordinary excuse. The budgerow provided for our use by our noble and generous patron is superbly equipped, and furnished with an obliging crew, so that our progress has no law, and we halt or proceed at the mandate of inclination alone. When the prospect appears inviting, and the weather allows us to land, we take an airing on shore, I supporting Maxwell's still tottering footsteps, and limiting rigorously the duration of the stroll. He amuses himself with styling me a beneficent tyrant when I enforce an early return to the boat.

"The truth is, ma'am," he says, "that you enjoy acting surgeon and nurse and usher in one, and imposing your commands upon an unfortunate wretch too weak to resist you. Well, well; continue to pursue me with cushions, and insist on my reclining on couches; your rule will soon be over. In a short space, ma'am, this great lazy husband of yours will return to his proper sphere, and will issue his orders instead of amiably obeying yours. Then you will recline on couches, as a Calcutta lady should do, and you'll know what it is to be protected instead of protecting."

Maxwell is right; I do derive an infinite pleasure from the exercise of this protecting care, but I anticipate an equal one

in submitting to his when he is sufficiently recovered to exert it. I am writing this in the most confused and interrupted style, for he has possessed himself of the earlier sheets of these memoirs, and looks up perpetually to ask about one thing or another—but I can't express the bliss I experience to be interrupted by him!

Of his frightful experiences at Seringapatam, Maxwell is little inclined to speak particularly. I'll confess I would have had him recount their whole history in order, that I might be able to picture more fully what he endured, but perceiving how deeply the idea revolts him, I have ceased to ask this, and content myself with the hints he lets drop when the recollection of past suffering asserts itself in contrast with his present way of life. Although the penalty of death was denounced upon anybody that conveyed the slightest piece of intelligence to the captives, yet the most violent alternations of hope and fear were stimulated by the compassion or the fidelity of some of those around them. Their washerman had been a havildar in Colonel Baillie's detachment, and preserved all the remains of respect and attachment for his former superiors, while the lady of one of the officers succeeded in conveying to him money and news through an old woman who was mother to one of the Seapoys. The precious scraps of paper were handed from one to another enclosed in rice cakes called *hoppers*, or in what is styled a *cheroot* or *sagar*, the leaves of the tobacco-plant rolled up in the form of a tube so as to be smoked without a pipe. The unfortunate General Matthews, who was confined separately, succeeded in writing to the rest on the occasion of General Stewart's success at Cuddalore, informing them also of the treaty with the Marattas, and the expectation that Teepoo would be forced to make peace. Of the fulfilment of this anticipation the unhappy commander was never aware, perishing of poison, after a vigorous contest with hunger, last September. In the same month three of the captives expired from the same cause in the city of Mysore, and above eighteen in the mountain fortress of Cavel-Drook, so that those who remained bound themselves by a compact to offer such resistance as must lead to their perishing on the scymeters of the

guard, should it be attempted to separate any of them from the rest.

The most frightful peril of all occurred only four days before peace was signed, when one of the prisoners, unable t . support the joyful prospect, rumours of which had been conveyed to them, became deranged in intellect, and accused the remainder of trying to poison him. In terror lest he should betray their possession of writing-materials, which would have brought death both on themselves and on the servants who had procured them, they passed an entire night in destroying every scrap of paper in the place, while the unhappy maniac strode about in his irons, vowing to be revenged on his comrades. Happily the Keeladar, to whom he had appealed, merely sent a deputy to enquire into the matter, and Captain Baird snatching from the madman's hand the bread he declared to be poisoned, and eating it in the deputy's presence, he was satisfied of the true state of the case.

This Captain Baird, who was one of the officers taken with Colonel Baillie in 1780, was the chief means of maintaining the spirits of the prisoners. A person of haughty and indomitable temper, he refused to allow his comrades to despair, and took the leading position among them by virtue of the fortitude of his character. When first brought into the prison, he was half dead from the wounds he had received, but was ordered to be placed like the rest in irons of nine pounds' weight. His life was saved by the humanity of an elderly officer, Major Lucas, who voluntarily submitted to wear his friend's irons in addition to his own, dying before the captivity was half expired. Mr Baird it was to whom the news that peace was actually concluded was first communicated, though the gaolers, fiendish in their cruelty to the last, threatened the prisoners with being led out to execution before they confessed the truth. Their irons struck off, the captives were still kept in strict confinement for a fortnight, but were permitted to walk about, (which they did with ludicrously short and constrained steps,) and rejoice their eyes with the sight of nature in the garden where they were placed. Maxwell is overwhelmed with shame because the partial release, instead of restoring him to health, almost

brought about his death. The wound he had received in the capture of Onore still unhealed, and that inflicted in the sally when he was taken prisoner in a frightful condition, owing to the absence of surgical care, he was in a far weaker state after ten months' imprisonment than the majority of those who had endured it for nearly four years. There was no expectation of his recovery, when Captain Baird made him a visit as he lay half senseless in the choultry or summer-house where he was quartered.

"Pho, man! your lass would show a better spirit in your case," he cried. "Pluck up heart, if you wish ever to behold her again!"

The rebuke was effectual, for Maxwell was roused from his stupor. "And thus, ma'am," says my dear love, "'tis to Mr Baird's rough tongue that Mrs Maxwell owes the possession of her husband, such as he is."

[This Captain Baird it was to whom a beneficent and retributive Providence granted fourteen years later the honour of effecting the glorious capture of the city in which he had suffered such severe trials.—*Note added in* 1818.]

BELVIDERE-HOUSE, ALLYPORE, *Dec. ye* 23*rd.*

Sheltered once more by this well-remembered roof, Maxwell and I have the additional happiness of acting in some degree as the hosts of our great and noble patron. About the end of October a letter from him found us at Monghyr, written from Bennaris, and announcing his speedy return to Calcutta owing to the melancholy intelligence of the decease of the respectable Mr Wheler, which had reached him in the course of his labours for the good of the zemeendarry. He designed to spend a few days at Sooksaugur on his way down, Mr Macpherson being sick and Mr Stables absent from Calcutta, and then to take up his abode at Allypore, which had been put up for sale at outcry[1] and bought in again. The dwelling, which he thought to have quitted for ever, would, (he said,) be insupportable to him without her with whom he must always associate it in his mind, unless his obliging friends Captain and Mrs Maxwell

[1] Auction.

would compassionate his solitude so far as to occupy the house and receive him there as a guest. This flattering request coming at the time when Maxwell, his health largely restored by the temperate climate of the river, was beginning to chafe under his inaction and complain that he was forgotten, I rejoiced as much as he did at such an evidence to the contrary, and making the voyage with all convenient speed, we established ourselves at Belvidere in time to receive Mr Hastings there in the middle of November. Since then, what with public affairs, meetings of Council, the committee for the new church, and all the numerous occasions of ceremony which have demanded the Governor-General's presence after his prolonged travels, we have seen but little of our honoured guest, but yesterday he returned early from the town, designing, as he said, to incommode us with his company for an entire evening, since the Christmas festivities would shortly demand all his time. For two days, since the arrival of overland letters on the evening of the 20th, we have observed in him a strong tinge of melancholy, and after supper, when he invited me to be his opponent in a game of chess—a pastime for which his lady used to discover an extreme partiality—I ventured, Maxwell engaging the aids-du-camp in another part of the room, to express the hope that he had not been disappointed in his expectation of rejoining Mrs Hastings.

"The blow an't fallen so far," he replied, "though I speak in fear and trembling lest it should arrive at any time. This new administration of Mr Pitt's—which they do me the honour to call *Hastings' Administration*—is pleased for the moment to profess the utmost attachment for me, to such a degree that Scott tells me a very high personage, by whom I understand Mr Pitt himself, cried out to him, 'Heavens! what shall we do if Hastings should throw up the government?' With his usual propensity for believing what pleases him, poor Scott has built the hugest superstructure on these perfunctory words, which I take it were merely intended in the nature of a compliment, or to elicit some information which the Minister happened to desire. He is persuaded that under the new India Bill, His Majesty will appoint me afresh as Governor-General, which

would be equivalent to a command to remain here. This cheerfulness of his provokes me, and I am displeased with him for being the dupe of his wishes, for by the same packet he forwards me Mr Pitt's speech in introducing this very Bill, in which he admits all the slanders of Burke and Fox without that expression of personal rancour which betrayed their injustice. I'll assure my kind Mrs Maxwell that when I read it I marvelled from what abyss of hell Mr Pitt had drawn the monster, invested with all the most horrid attributes conceivable, against whose rapacity and thirst for blood the Bill was directed—and 'twas designed as a portrait of myself! And this is the man who assures poor Scott of his esteem and admiration for me—while declining to recommend me for any mark of the royal favour! No, he won't desire to continue me here, unless by any mischance his iniquitous Bill has been hung up for this session. I have made the Court of Directors aware of the utmost concession I can offer—and what a sacrifice that would be, were it accepted, at what a cost in health, fortune and family affection I should fulfil it, Mrs Maxwell will know. If I should receive, before the 31st of next month, a request to continue in my present situation another year, coupled with an intimation to my colleagues that on points on which we differ they shall yield me the lead and the responsibility should I require it, I will remain. Without such an assurance, I won't lose another day here, to be brow-beaten by my associates and reproached by my superiors. I have taken my passage in the *Barrington*, and I intend to whisper the supercargo to hasten her lading, so that she may be ready to sail as soon as the date I have named is past. I am literally sick of suspense, and fear to see the road to freedom, now open, close before me, though there's only one other thing would detain me—the refusal of my colleagues to promise a punctual adherence to my engagements with the Nabob-Vizier, and I think they will oblige me in that, if only to have the government left in their hands."

"Oh, dear sir, how can I speak of the grief of your friends here to lose you, when such bliss will be yours as the result of your departure!" I cried. "Otherwise I might be tempted to

wish that Messieurs Macpherson and Stables might again display the ingratitude they have so often shown, and decline to accept the way of escape you have provided for them out of the difficulties into which they brought us with the Nabob-Vizier."

"Tempted? A temptation of the devil, indeed! No, ma'am, I trust I have placed the affairs both of Owd and Bennaris on a sound footing, and future generations will be grateful to me, if not the present. To wish the work undone would be to condemn the unhappy provincials to untold misery, the worst that the ignorance and avarice of such men as Fowke and Bristow could accomplish. Ah! could I convey to Mrs Maxwell an idea of the desolation that broods over those wretched territories, in which the ravages of famine have not only not been mitigated, but have been rendered more fearful, by the tyranny of man! Mobs of complainants attended me from Buxar to Joosee, and paraded at my gate when in Lucnow, and the condition of the poor was so pitiable that I ordered a daily distribution of grain at my own expense—seeking to atone for the miseries I had caused, as Mr Burke would say."

"Sure, sir, you're unfair to the poor gentleman! Even he could not charge you with the responsibility for the failure of the rains."

"Indeed, ma'am? I wish I were as certain of sailing on the first of February as I am that this famine will be laid at my door. Why, what could be more certain than that the Sics[1] and all the other poor wretches who never saw nor heard of Mr Hastings have had their rain withheld as a divine judgment on Mr Hastings' crimes?"

"But the famine stopped at our borders, sir. How was that?"

"Why, indeed, that's a strange circumstance, and difficult to reconcile with the divine justice. But no, here's the explanation. 'Who says the famine never touched Bengall? We have only Hastings' word for't, and he's well known to be incapable of veracity. Of course Bengall suffered horribly.'"

"And your efforts to alleviate the suffering an't to be taken into account, sir?"

[1] Sikhs.

"Certainly not, ma'am. They are merely endeavours to shield myself from the consequences of my deeds, and 'tis only an additional crime on my part that while the city of Bennaris was peaceful and prosperous under the system of police I devised for it three years ago, the mismanagement of Mr Fowke, the Directors' own choice, had cast the rural districts into the most exquisite confusion and discontent. And that reminds me. Pray, ma'am, what would have been the sentiments of the Directors, when they insisted on burdening me afresh with Bristow and Fowke, if they had guessed that Bristow's exactions would unite the Nabob-Vizier and the Begums in one inseparable bond against him, and induce the ladies to apply for justice to me, of whose violence and rapacity they are supposed to live in a perpetual terror?"

"Indeed, dear sir, this is the most joyful thing I have heard. Are the Begums actually convinced of your benevolent designs towards them?"

"Why, so it seems, ma'am, and they may well be, since they are left in undisputed possession of a hundred and twenty lacks of the treasure. More than that, I have restored to them a portion of their jaghiers, for which they cherished a sentimental attachment, under conditions safeguarding to the full Azoph-ool-Dowlah's sovereignity, and they are prepared to acclaim me as their father and their mother throughout Asia. The Nabob-Vizier's debt to the Company is discharged, he is on better terms with his mother and grandmother than have subsisted between 'em since his accession, and the province is released from Mr Bristow's tyranny, and placed under a form of government that ensures, as I trust, its future tranquillity and encrease in wealth."

"With what acclamations would you be received in England, sir, were the true effect of your measures realised there!"

"Indeed, ma'am, I question it. 'Tis true that at the despatch of the last advices my name was held in the highest honour, owing to the termination of the Maratta War and the expectation of the peace with Teepoo, but the popular favour has no secure basis. One adverse rumour, one bold demagogue pouring forth envenomed charges in the House, and where is my reputa-

tion? Never would I consent to build my happiness on such a foundation. Poor Scott has devised a scheme of his going into Parliament to defend my interests there until my arrival, and then resigning his seat in my favour, but I reserve to myself the privilege of chusing my own mode of life, and it won't be in the political line. Upon India I can speak with the experience of a life-time, but the House don't desire instruction. Rather does it prefer a foolhardy ignorance, or why this talk of sending my Lord Cornwallis to succeed me? Pho! I have every veneration for that respectable nobleman, but what reason is there for placing him here, save that he has never set foot in the East, and by presiding at the loss of one colonial empire may be presumed to have learnt how to maintain a second?"

"But the House of Commons, sir!" I cried. "Who can have suggested such a mode of life to Mr Scott for you? A peerage and a red ribband, with a genteel subsistence from the Company —that's what all the world conceives destined for you."

"All the world is sometimes mistaken, ma'am. And I have also a pride of my own. When the earlier promise of a British peerage and an annuity for three lives dwindles down to an Irish title and a fifth or sixth part of Lord Clive's jaghier for my life alone, no influence on earth shall prevail with me to accept of either. I won't be placed on a level with my Lord Macartney, nor receive any pension that should terminate with my life. There's but one person on earth for whose sake I am interested in the offer of either, but not even for her satisfaction would I lower myself in my own eyes. Nothing but the fear of seeing Mrs Hastings reduced to penury led me to request of the Directors the grant of the ten lacks presented me by the Nabob-Vizier—making twenty-nine lacks in all, private gifts to myself, which I have voluntarily paid into their treasury—and I received only coarse and scurrilous rebukes in return. I will ask for nothing more; the justice of my country will surely award me a competency, and on that I can live, assisted by the good sense of her who will make the most of whatever we may have for a subsistence."

"Will Mrs Hastings chuse to live retired in the country, sir, or will you prefer to remain within reach of the great world?"

"I should prefer it for her sake, ma'am, for how could I answer to my conscience for keeping such a creature from the scenes in which she is so well fitted to shine? Inevitably the first female in any company, however high, how could I condemn her to the society of a country town? I tell you, ma'am, there's few things have caused me a greater disappointment than that I was not present to see her make her first appearance at Court. I shall attend her thither in future, I trust, but by that time her figure and countenance will be known. Would that I might have beheld her burst upon the world at that drawing-room to which Scott attended her, in all the splendour of her matchless charms, set off by all the decorations taste could devise! Sure Mrs Maxwell must agree with me that not even the most celebrated beauties could compare with her? She would attract exclusive attention in any company."

"Dear sir, I can't deny it, since the beauties of Mrs Hastings' face and form are heightened by her tasteful and uncommon style in dress. But I am certain that she would retire with you to the most rural depths were she apprehensive of causing you uneasiness by remaining in town."

"An't I aware of it? Could any instance of complacency on the part of the loveliest and most obliging of women astonish me? I am indeed the most blessed of men, and yet——" Mr Hastings sighed deeply, and the shadow returned to his brow. Presently he extracted from among the papers in his pocket-book a letter in his lady's hand, and giving me one of the sheets, desired me to read it. I had read but a few lines when my eyes were suffused with tears, for it was the latest letter he had received from her, written to announce her safe arrival in England, but conveying, alas! the intimation that the hope at which she had hinted in speaking to me, and which had, as was well known, caused Mr Hastings the most excessive joy on her acquainting him of it in her letter from St Helena, was frustrated. I could now understand his melancholy aspect, thus baulked of the boon which he had long regarded as out of his reach, but which had been, as it were, delusively offered him again.

"I received it on my return from the play on Monday night,"

he said, seeing me incapable of speech. "I sat reading it till past two, and lay long unable to close my eyes. With an ingratitude which fills me with terror when I think of it, lest the blessing so little appreciated should be removed, I allowed the disappointment to obscure in my mind all my reasons for thankfulness. Is not the being I revere most in the world at the end of her perils, safely arrived at home, and hopeful of being soon completely restored to health? And what have I lost? A hope which I have enjoyed for less than three months—yet how was it become part of my being! But I won't repine; I won't give the loveliest of women the pain even of fancying me disturbed. She is spared to the world and to her most unworthy husband, and to the utmost of his power he'll show his gratitude for it. When he rejoins her, bereft alike of the equanimity of mind and the strength of constitution he used to boast, no effort on his part shall be wanting during the remainder of his existence to prove to her how infinitely he knows himself indebted to her."

"And consider, dear sir, how much less restricted than here will now be your opportunities for enjoying Mrs Hastings' conversation."

"Did you think I had forgot it, ma'am? Instead of moments snatched from business, or filched from tedious associates, for securing an instant's refreshment, I shall be blessed with her constant presence. What walks shall we have together, infinitely more delightful than those of Allypore! what excursions from home! I have a hundred schemes of pleasure playing in my mind, but they will all sink into oblivion at the moment of my beholding that beloved visage."

"Oh no, sir, not all!" I cried. "Not that early ambition of yours of purchasing back the ancient abode of your family."

"Mrs Maxwell is right; I must except that. From the age of seven, when the determination to repurchase Daylesford first formed itself in my mind, it has never faded away. I was then dependent upon those who were scarcely raised above the pressure of absolute want, and the accomplishment of that or any other object of honourable ambition has often seemed impossible since. But I cherish it still, and I trust in future to make

Captain and Mrs Maxwell welcome at Daylesford, as they have welcomed me here."

GHYRETTY CAMP, *Jan. ye 26th*, 1785.

The best and noblest of men has taken his formal leave of us, and entered upon the first stage of the actual business of his departure. I had trusted we should be permitted to enjoy the contemplation of his virtues until he set foot on his budgerow for the last voyage down the river, but this he would not suffer, desiring to know us established in our new situation before he sailed. With his usual thoughtfulness, he has appointed Maxwell to the command of the Artillery detachment at Bankypore, thus ensuring him against the necessity of facing the climate of Lower Bengall, so dangerous to his enfeebled constitution, as he must have done had he remained in Calcutta. Nor did our generous patron's kindness end here. Under the name of a wedding present, he has provided us with the furniture for our bungiloe, and all the necessary equipment of horses and vehicles, so that the evidences of his beneficence must meet us on every hand when we reach our new abode, whither we proceed to-morrow. Maxwell affects to condole with me upon the decline in my fortunes, from the splendours of Government House to the bungiloe of a junior officer in an up-country station, but he is well aware how empty those splendours appeared when I was deprived of him.

The latest kindness of our illustrious friend—surely I may be bold enough to style him thus—was to convey us the first part of the journey, as far as Chandernagore, in his own budgerow, that we might witness his inspection at Ghyretty Gaut of the troops who were returned with Colonel Pearse from the Carnatic, having marched the entire distance by land, as they had first gone thither. Never have I beheld so affecting a sight. The weather-beaten aspect of Colonel Pearse's Seapoys, in their motley and patched dress, their countenances burnt as black as ink, contrasted with the sleek olive skins of the regiments which had never quitted the Presidency, related its own history as clearly as did the diminution in their numbers, the force which had started with a strength of five thousand having been

reduced to something over eighteen hundred. Bare-headed, and wearing a plain blue coat, Mr Hastings rode along the lines, greeted by the Seapoys in their own tongue with the cry, "*Mester Hushteen Saub Behauder kee Jye!*" which may be rendered, "Honour to the victorious Mr Hastings!" Having inspected the ranks, the Governor-General took up his position before the army, when the rewards ordered for the returning force were read out. To each Seapoy regiment was given a pair of honorary standards, to each of their Soobahdars and those of the Golandauze a gold medal, to each Jemidar one of silver, while the private soldiers received badges of inferior value. Additional pay to the amount of one rupee a month was granted to each Seapoy, and of two rupees to each European non-commissioned officer and private, while the officers were all confirmed in their temporary rank absolutely, and their names marked for promotion. Mr Hastings then presented swords of honour to Colonel Pearse, and to Lieutenant-Colonels Edmonstone and Blaine, and this done, in the kindest and most delicate manner he summoned Maxwell forward, and presented him with his own sword, expressing his delight in thus testifying publicly his esteem for one whom he considered it an honour to have entertained in his family—a member of that glorious band, the prisoners of Seringapatam.

It may have been this affecting and gratifying scene that so moved me, but I can't even think of Mr Hastings' public speech, which followed, without weeping. And yet I an't alone in my emotion, for a young officer of one of the untravelled regiments, standing at my side, and noted rather for a persistent levity than for attention to his military duties, was moved to honest tears by the eloquent appeal addressed to those present as soldiers and as men. Finding my eyes upon him, to my extreme confusion, he read sympathy in the tears which filled them, and exclaimed, with an engaging fervour, "I've been a sad idle fellow hitherto, ma'am, but hang me if I don't turn over a new leaf from to-day! If ever I make any figure in the military line, to Mr Hastings' words the credit will be due." I held out my hand to him upon a sudden impulse, and he kissed it as though to record his pledge.

[That this resolve was due to no transitory impression, but to a fixed determination, the records of the career of Sir H—— F—— will abundantly prove.—*Note added in* 1818.]

This morning we attended Mr Hastings to the Gaut and bade him farewell, with such an invincible display of affectionate veneration as can never, surely, have been called forth by any public person before. With his accustomed sprightliness, he reproved us for desiring to detain him in Bengall, averring that his sufferings from the climate were such, that did he remain another year, he would need to take witnesses home with him to assure Mrs Hastings that he was indeed her husband.

BANKYPORE, *Feb. ye 18th.*

Mr Hastings has sailed. After returning to Calcutta, he parted from his colleagues with the most benevolent expressions of advice and encouragement, submitted to receive an address of gratitude from the gentlemen of the settlement, and presented an additional piece of ground for the use of the new Church. Avoiding with the utmost precaution the slightest possibility of a public departure such as had gratified Mrs Hastings, he slipped (as they say,) on board his budgerow after delivering up to Mr Macpherson the keys of the treasury and of Fort William, and in the least ostentatious manner imaginable made his way down to Kedgery, where he embarked on board the *Barrington*. Colonel Toone, Major Sands and Mr Anderson attend him, and among his fellow-passengers is Mr Shore, who would be mortally offended nowadays to be reminded that he had ever dubbed himself a Franciscan. Thus our illustrious ruler quits us, followed by the blessings and good wishes of Europeans and Indians alike, whether he proceed to the elevated situation which his talents and the advantage of his country would mark out for him, or to the genteel retirement which his own tastes would indicate. The veneration of his fellow-countrymen and the society of his beloved partner assured to him, may not we, who must mourn his loss, yet console ourselves with the reflection that his protracted misfortunes are at length ended?

CHAPTER XXX.

A FAREWELL.

QUEEN SQUARE, BATH, [illegible] 1813.

Little did I expect, in terminating, as I believed, these memoirs thirty-two years ago, to add some concluding pages to them at a spot separated by near half the world from that in which they were composed. But I am impelled to do this by a conversation in which I took part last night, on which occasion we made our first visit to the Assembly Rooms since arriving in Bath, where my dear Colonel has been recommended to pass the winter, in the hope that the waters may relieve his sufferings from various old wounds, by which he is often sadly incommoded. Entering the Rooms, we were greeted with all the civility imaginable by the Master of the Ceremonies, who on learning that I considered myself too old to dance, would have had us join one of the parties that were making up for cards, but we entreated his indulgence for this evening, the scene appearing of such a delightful brilliance and strangeness to our unaccustomed eyes. When I had previously visited the Rooms, I remarked to him, I had beheld the great Dr Johnson there, and since that time I had seen none but Indian assemblies, over-provided with gentlemen and very poorly supplied with ladies. With the jocular expression of a wish that his lines had been cast in such scenes rather than these, the obliging gentleman bowed himself away, but very shortly brought up a good bluff sort of person, with every evidence of the country 'squire about him, and his lady, who had the air of having been a blue and a wit in her youth, to present to us. They were no sooner seated in an agreeable position for conversation than the lady turned to me, and with the utmost vivacity demanded,

"Is it really true, as the M.C. has just hinted to me, that Mrs Colonel Maxwell once had the honour to be acquainted with the illustrious Dr Johnson?"

"Indeed, ma'am, I was once presented to him, but I knew him better through his correspondence with my venerable grandpapa, whom I assisted in the character of a secretary."

"What a privilege! what an inestimable privilege!" cried the lady. "I assure you, my dear ma'am, you'll find every door in Bath open to you. The friend and correspondent of Dr Johnson!"

"Why, indeed," said I, not wholly pleased, "I had never thought of founding any claim to distinction on the fact, I'll assure you, ma'am. Were I in the humour to boast, 'twould be my pride to say that I was for seven years in the family of an even more illustrious person, the late—alas that I must say it!—the late Mr Hastings."

"Hastings — Hastings? Oh, that shocking creature who starved to death a whole royal family in the East Indies, and escaped hanging because he'd bribed the jury!"

"And who bought his wife for her weight in gold—ha, ha!" laughed the 'Squire, much pleased with his own readiness of recollection.

"Sir! Ma'am!" I cried, then paused, unable to speak, the memory of that venerable and benevolent countenance as I had last beheld it rising before me. Perceiving my agitation, Maxwell came to my relief, and with a calm and resolute air that carried conviction, favoured the 'Squire and his lady with more and truer information on the subject of Mr Hastings than they had ever before enjoyed the opportunity of acquiring. When we parted, they apologized very civilly for the expressions that had wounded me, but I could not so easily forget them. This morning proving wet, I gave my dear Colonel the trouble of disentangling from among our heavy luggage the box which contained my old papers, and we have passed the day in examining them.

"My love," says Maxwell at last, "don't it strike you that this record of yours needs some concluding lines? To end with the amiable aspiration that Mr Hastings' troubles were terminated appears misleading. To add some brief remarks on the remainder of his career, and then to examine and revise the whole, inserting notes where the fuller light of the present

proves them to be needed, would be an elegant and agreeable occupation for you this winter, and a pious care for the memory of our deceased friend."

"I had thought of destroying the papers," said I, "some of the conversations recorded indiscreetly at the time appear too intimate to be exposed to the risk of falling into different hands."

"Then let us enclose them in a secure covering, with a direction that the pacquet an't to be opened during the present century. When we find that desirable country seat for which we are to search in the spring, we will lay it up in the strong-room, and explain its nature in a letter to our son Hastings, commanding him to hand on the trust to his eldest son after him. By the year 1900 the record can't give pain to any living creature."

"But can it serve any good purpose so far hence?" I asked.

"My love, if even eighty years hence any child or grandchild of ours is destitute of an interest in Mr Hastings, or of concern for his honour, they will be no true descendants of William and Hester Maxwell. If they should be thus careless, they may destroy the pacquet, but if not, they will reverence it as a precious heritage."

"True, my dear. We will leave it as a test of their fidelity to our teaching."

. . . . . .

Through the kindness of Mr Thompson, with whom Mr Hastings maintained a frequent correspondence after his departure, Maxwell and I, in our new abode at Bankypore, were kept regularly informed of the proceedings of our beloved friend and patron, rejoicing with him in his swift and agreeable voyage, his joyful meeting with Mrs Hastings, and the extraordinary affability which marked his reception by their Majesties. The malice of Mr Burke, so we believed, confessed itself baffled in the face of the universal esteem felt for his desired victim, and attempted no more than to promise a motion of censure in the future. But while we were experiencing the utmost satisfaction in the reports that reached us of the honour shown everywhere to Mr Hastings, his constant association with all the most respectable and elevated characters in the kingdom,

and the gracious welcome always accorded him at Court, the sentiment against him was steadily growing. Behind Mr Burke was one who could never forget that whereas he had set out to crush Mr Hastings, he had quitted India leaving him victorious. Never forgetting, Mr Francis never forgave. A ready command and persistent employment of all the resources of the pamphleteer and the journal-writer, aided by the general distrust and contempt felt for the class of *Nabobs*, and particularly for that portion of them called the *Bengal Squad*, was further assisted by the lavish generosity of Mr Hastings, and, alas that I must say it! by his lady's excessive parade of jewellery. It was impossible for the public mind to conceive that a man who would spare no cost to oblige his friends by procuring them curious or valuable articles from India, and whose wife's dress was covered with gems such as had rarely been seen in Europe, was not possessed of a colossal fortune. The simple habits of Mr Hastings himself were disregarded, and all eyes fixed upon his *ostentation*, which was proved by his use of the splendid ivory furniture presented to him by Munny Begum, and by the long tail of his beautiful little Arab horse!

This sentiment might have expired in time had Mr Hastings been content to remain in a private station, without laying claim to that recognition of his services to which he felt himself justly entitled, but this he could not bring himself to do, although he did not share in the conviction of Mr Pitt's good-will towards him which animated so many of his friends. His former doubt of the Minister was revived by the commerce he had with him, but this did not restrain him from taking steps to rid himself of the unjust aspersions under which he lay so long as Mr Burke's notice remained on the journals of the House. To us who know him it appears certain that, left to himself, he would have postponed the matter until he had more fully established himself in the confidence of his fellow-countrymen, but that the anxiety of Mrs Hastings to see him granted the promised peerage, and of Major Scott to make a figure in the House of Commons, precipitated the disastrous result. Always eager to interfere, always sanguine of success,

Mr Scott challenged Mr Burke to bring forward his threatened motion, and the challenge was accepted. With the joyful assistance of Mr Francis, Mr Burke prepared his charges, which ranged over all the acts of Mr Hastings' government from first to last. Envenomed as was the language in which they were couched, unrivalled as was the eloquence with which they were launched, Administration possessed a majority that could afford to laugh at them, had Administration itself proved faithful to its pledges.

As is well known, Mr Pitt stultified his entire previous record, and voted for the impeachment of Mr Hastings on the extraordinary ground that he had designed to exact from Chyte Sing a larger fine than his misdeeds demanded! His party, summoned by circular to support Mr Hastings, was thrown by his action into confusion, and Mr Burke and Mr Francis carried their point. We can entertain no more doubt than Mr Hastings himself as to the reason of this monstrous betrayal. The late Governor-General was known to be in high esteem at Court, and to enjoy the hearty friendship of the extraordinary and imperious being who held the situation of Lord Chancellor, and who had threatened to procure him a peerage on his own motion if the Ministry still shrank from the responsibility. Moreover, Mr Hastings had displayed a disposition to place his unrivalled experience of the East at the service of the Board of Control, which caused considerable alarm to his ancient enemy, Mr Dundas, who was in authority there. Were the principle once admitted, that a knowledge of the East was to be desired in a Government department dealing with India, the ignorance so sedulously cultivated in such offices must necessarily yield before the claims of experience, and Mr Dundas would be in danger of finding himself superseded by Mr Hastings. With the malignity born of terror, he pressed his situation on Mr Pitt, and Mr Pitt responded to his appeal. How often did we ask ourselves, twenty years later, when Mr Pitt heard the Speaker's casting vote delivered in favour of the impeachment of Mr Dundas, then Viscount Melville, whether he regarded this turn of affairs as the just punishment for their joint surrender of an innocent man to his foes.

When the news of the proposed impeachment reached Bengal, to be received with mingled incredulity and horror, Maxwell despatched an urgent letter by the first overland pacquet, entreating to be permitted to come home and bear witness in Mr Hastings' favour, or at least stand at his side and assist him in his defence. The answer he received could have been written by no other hand than Mr Hastings' own :—

"If I find myself in need of your testimony," he wrote, "I promise on my honour to demand it, for to do otherwise would wrong your friendship; but if I am able to avoid asking the sacrifice of you, indulge me with the thought that there is one friend I have not been constrained to deprive of his means of livelihood by requesting his attendance here."

This sacred command obeyed, Maxwell and I were reduced to seeking with the most poignant anxiety the earliest news of the infamous and memorable events that followed. How many times has Maxwell's hand flown to his sword when I read to him, in a voice choked with indignant tears, of the insults heaped on that venerated head! how often has he desired to hasten home overland and challenge the Managers one after the other, and Mr Francis after them! Those who have never known Mr Hastings will fail to understand the incredulous indignation with which we heard that he, whose heart, whose house, whose purse, were ever open to the tale of woe, whose affability had endeared him to European and Indian alike, whose manner of life equalled in simplicity that of the ancient hermits, whose tenderness made the sight of sorrow that he could not relieve a perpetual misery to him—that this man should be called corrupt, hypocritical, cruel, rapacious, a thief, a tyrant and a cheat; his very patronage of literature seized upon to style him a *swindling Mœcenas!* With what tears of impotent wrath have we learnt that while their spokesmen alluded to him as "that degraded man at your bar, loaded with crimes and groaning under his enormities," "that wicked wretch, that scourge of India, that criminal," "looking like a hungry Tyger, ready to howl for his prey," the elected representatives of the *gentlemen of England*—the party of freedom, as they style themselves, the champions of the oppressed—would mount on

the benches to scan their victim's countenance through opera-glasses, and observe the effect of the epithets on him?

To endure all this, and the further sight of Mr Francis, excluded by some faint notion of propriety from the number of the Managers, but gloating in their shadow over the gratification of his hoarded revenge, without bitterness, without even the indulgence of a morose contempt for his persecutors—what a testimony to the true disposition of the man! So lately the undisputed ruler of millions, his word law to so large a portion of the human race, so confident in the justice of his country, so sanguine of an old age of leisured labour and merited repose, what had he received? The odium which had gathered about his predecessors returned from India had escaped them to fall on him who had never received a gift without paying it into the public treasury. The blame due to his associates and inferiors for the wars and other measures undertaken in spite of his protests was transferred from them to him; his best designs, his most successful achievements, were imputed to the basest of motives. On every side, day after day, he met the gaze of a thousand curious eyes, their owners assembled to hear the most famous orators of the age pour forth all the rhetoric of their vituperation upon him. Mr Burke, exulting with an indecent delight in the delineation of horrors which had as little to do with Mr Hastings as with Julius Cæsar, Mr Sheridan, with an hereditary dramatic touch, converting the sordid rapacity of the Begums into the theme of a classical tragedy, and affecting to sink exhausted into the arms of Mr Burke at the close—even these were less despicable than their less distinguished associates, who conceived themselves forced to excel their leaders in abuse, if not in eloquence. But among these last there was one whose appearance must have wounded the heart of Mr Hastings as keenly as did the dagger of Brutus that of his benefactor—Sir Gilbert Elliot, brother of the noble youth to whom he had given so large a share of his affection and his confidence. I would desire to speak ill of the dead, and I am assured that Lord Minto, in his own experience of India, learned to regret bitterly the ingratitude of which he had been guilty towards his father's friend, his brother's patron, the constant conferrer of benefits

on himself, but this afforded no alleviation of the pangs he had inflicted.

We were not entirely devoid of consolation even under these accumulated miseries, but it sprang almost wholly from the demeanour of the heroic sufferer himself. Agonized by the report that at the commencement of the trial Mr Hastings looked very infirm and much indisposed, pale and changed, with harass written on his face, we were almost prepared to hear that his feeble frame had sunk under such a load of calumny, when we were reassured by the arrival of letters wrote with all his old sprightliness. The only point that had power to rouse him to anger was the ignominious ceremonial of kneeling before the House of Lords, which he justly considered it iniquitous to exact from one uncondemned. To another point of the etiquette on these occasions he declined resolutely to submit, viz., the wearing of black clothes. Confident in his innocence, he refused thus to cast himself upon their lordships' mercy, and while disclaiming with his usual simplicity the *Nabob's livery* of gold lace, attired himself in plain blue or purple, green or poppy-colour. In his letters he assured us perpetually that he suffered only from beholding the sufferings of Mrs Hastings, who allowed her spirits to be unduly affected by the malice with which he was assailed, although he should not be too sanguine of the result of his trial, were the sole crime laid to his charge to be that he was prominently concerned in the revolt of America. From others we learned of the poetical impromptus with which he was accustomed to enliven his friends in the course of the trial, and of his cheerful remark to a female spectator, who was very closely confined by her duties at Court, "I must come here to have the pleasure of seeing Miss B——, for I see her nowhere else." Other sources of comfort we found in the discomfiture of the Managers when the witnesses whom they summoned against Mr Hastings gave evidence in his favour, even under a strict cross-examination from their own side, in their neglect, which excited universal comment, to call Major Gordon, who had escaped with difficulty from the Begums' retainers, who attacked his detachment when Mr Hastings was believed to have been killed by Chyte Sing, and in the haughty boldness

of Sir Elijah Impey, who was considered to face the House of Commons rather as the accuser than as a person accused. Later on we had the pleasure of learning the favourable impression produced by the person and evidence of Mr Markham, the ungrudging testimony of Lord Stormont to the prescience with which Mr Hastings had acted upon the warning of the French designs sent by him from Paris through Mr Elliot, and lastly, the witness of the lamented Lord Cornwallis, despatched to Bengal to curse the work of Mr Hastings, but like the prophet Balaam, constrained to return and bless it.

But long before this point was reached, the persecuted victim had been driven by the apparent hopelessness of his situation to direct an affecting appeal to the hearts of his judges. Already sixty years of age, he had then been for four years loaded and tormented by the most virulent accusations, which were even now so far from approaching a conclusion that there was no human probability of his surviving long enough to offer his defence, far less to obtain judgment. The callousness betrayed in Mr Burke's rejoinder was so incredible as almost to be ludicrous. The tedious length of the trial he declared to be entirely due to the obstinacy of the prisoner, who persisted in contending the points urged against him, instead of suffering himself to be condemned unheard. The persons really meriting pity were the gentlemen giving themselves the trouble to accuse him, who were thus all detained from their ordinary avocations by one stubborn criminal!

Mr Burke's malice must questionless have made him oblivious of consistency, since he himself had actually moved, four years earlier, to commit his victim to close custody, on the ground that he had withdrawn huge sums from the public Funds in the intention of fleeing the country, but either a sensation of shame, or a regard for their own convenience, prevailed at length upon the Managers to terminate their charges, and permit the accused to make his defence. How admirably did this defence reflect the disposition of the great man who composed it! He would not suffer his reputation to rest upon the devices of rhetoric or the art of vituperation, but would meet the venomous distortions of his foes by a simple relation of the

actual facts. How entirely, also, did its reception betray the true character of the interest excited by the trial! Of the many who attended to hear Mr Hastings accused, few cared to examine with an unprejudiced mind the evidences of his innocence, and his own Counsel displayed a strange timidity, such as betrayed their conviction that they were on the unpopular side. Nevertheless, by one outburst of impatience, after years of unparalleled meekness, the sufferer drew to himself the sympathy of the public, even in opposition to Mr Burke. Interrupted in his statement with a trivial rebuke for some technical irregularity, he refused to tolerate the interruption, and with an impassioned emotion threw himself upon the protection of their lordships, pointing out that he had offered no contradiction throughout the long speeches of his accusers, and entreating, even demanding, an undisturbed hearing, which was unanimously accorded him. Grievous as had been the trial of temper caused by the length of the proceedings, it produced a more serious disadvantage with regard to the witnesses for the defence. Of these some were deceased, some returned to India, and some lost to sight, when their turn came to be examined, and one of the officers who attended both at the commencement and the termination of the trial, and gave evidence on Mr Hastings' behalf, had actually in the meantime made two voyages, and fought through the whole of the second campaign against Tippoo Saib! The end arrived at length, however, and the man who for thirteen years had supported, (like a second Atlas,) the entire weight of the British dominion in the East, left Westminster Hall acquitted both by his judges and in the opinion of his fellow-countrymen, but beggared in fortune, and pursued by the unrelenting enmity of the two political parties, both that which had attacked and that which had betrayed him.

To us, who were unaware of the total demolition of Mr Hastings' fortune, it was a cause of the greatest disappointment that instead of reaping, as we thought, the advantage of his vindication, he retired to his ancestral estate, now for the first time his own, and in future quitted it only for brief visits to London and similar excursions. But Mrs Hastings had suffered the mortification of seeing a large proportion of her savings

lost in the failure of the Dutch house with which they were invested, and had settled a considerable part of the remainder upon her son's wife, so that when it became clear that the Government would not follow the precedent usual in such cases, and defray the costs of the innocent defendant—namely, that it had interfered to dole out the Company's bounty to its ancient servant in the most grudging and the least advantageous manner imaginable—Mr Hastings recognised that he had no choice. Comparing himself pleasantly with Diocletian among his cabbages, or Cincinnatus returning to the plough, he became a country gentleman, and played the part with a keen interest, and an absence of bitterness, that gave nobody to guess it was not adopted at his own wish. In rebuilding first the mansion and then the church of Daylesford, in improving the estate and ameliorating the situation of the peasants upon it, he found occupation and entertainment. Pastoral and agricultural pursuits employed the mind which had so long been engrossed with the cares of state, though not to the exclusion of the polite arts. Literature and poetry continued to make their appeal to him, and he explored with a delight akin to enthusiasm the new world which the genius of the author of "Waverley" has opened to the present generation.

But the ruling feature of his disposition was, as ever, the most profound benevolence. To his tender affection for Mrs Hastings, his patriarchal care for the dwellers on his estates, was added an unflagging concern for all those with whom he had been acquainted in his Indian experience, and such a readiness to expend time and trouble on their behalf as could hardly be credited. Maxwell and I have a particular, though by no means an exclusive instance of this kindness to record, for when our children were sent home to be put to school, not content with inviting them to visit Daylesford in the holidays, and sending us the most minute reports of their health and progress in their studies, he gave himself the trouble to call in upon them at the seminaries where they were placed, and even removed his godson, our eldest boy, on his own responsibility from a school which he had reason to believe unsuited to him, and transferred him to another. There an't one of our sons and

daughters, all now happily established in life, but has reason to bless the names of Mr and Mrs Hastings.

The unassuming dignity, the true nobility of soul, which had always distinguished our illustrious friend, shone out as brightly during these years of retirement as when he was the first subject of the Crown. Patronised by the Prince Regent—let this fact stand to his Royal Highness's credit in opposition to his many detractors—and actually offered the peerage which Mrs Hastings desired above anything in the world, he declined to oblige even the being whose happiness was more to him than life at the expense of his own self-respect, and since the cruel falsehoods poured on his name could not be expunged from the Parliamentary records, refused the coveted honour. Not less elevated was his behaviour on an unexpected meeting with Mr Sheridan, which was brought about at Brighton by the Prince Regent himself. Sure some historical painter of the future will derive his inspiration from the scene—the meeting of the aged and injured statesman with the broken-down wit among those mock Oriental splendours which are as tawdry as Mr Sheridan's own heroics to those who are acquainted with the East. Mr Sheridan, in a hurried style, offers a few perfunctory words of regret for his part in the persecution of twenty years ago—he had been merely a pleader, constrained to make his plea as far as possible affecting; Mr Hastings, after looking him silently in the face, turns from him with a negligent bow: "That acknowledgment, sir, comes twenty years too late." To the offence taken by his royal patron at this rebuff is ascribed by some the cruel—I can find no other word for it—disturbance of the minds of Mr Hastings and his lady on the occasion of the visit of the Allied Sovereigns to the City of London, when his Royal Highness declared publicly his intention to confer further honours upon him, and did nothing. But even the frown of royalty loses something of its terrors in the face of the heart-felt admiration and esteem of the nation. Mr Hastings received in some degree a recompense for all his sorrows when, called as a witness before the Parliamentary Committee on the question of the renewal of the Company's charter, the members all rose and stood uncovered as he passed out, this mark of respect being paid not only by

the Lords who had sat in judgment upon him, but by the Commons who had accused him.

What a difference between this peaceful and serene old age and that of the man to whom, more than to any other, Mr Hastings' misfortunes were due, and whose death, as we learn this morning, has so shortly succeeded his! That bitterness, from which the innocent victim was so signally preserved, appears to have descended in double volume upon the disappointed slanderer. Soured by the triumphant acquittal of Mr Hastings, the disposition of Mr Francis acquired an added tinge of moroseness when he was finally passed over for the post of Governor-General, the object of his fierce ambition. True, those in authority were not ashamed to endow him with a title and a red ribband, while Mr Hastings went undecorated to the tomb, but they did not venture to face the storm that would have assailed them in the event of their placing him in his victim's seat. His later days were shadowed with a strange compound of terror and anticipation—the result of the labours of an ingenious gentleman who brought home to him an unsuspected achievement of his youth. When "Junius Identified" reached India, there was but one voice from all those who had enjoyed Mr Francis's acquaintance—*How comes it we never guessed this before?* Were there no other proof, it's inconceivable there should exist two men equally rancorous in their malignity, and equally devoid of scruple in their methods of gratifying it. Half terrified at the consequences should he acknowledge the truth, half greedy of the notoriety that must accrue to so famous a personage, Sir Philip Francis ended his life destitute of friends, and attended only by the romantic young creature upon whom he had imposed a totally fictitious character as her husband.

It was in June of this present year that my dear Colonel and I, arriving from India, took occasion to make a visit—imperiously demanded by both Mr and Mrs Hastings—to Daylesford, in the course of our journey into Shropshire, where Maxwell desired to make acquaintance with the surroundings of his wife's youth. It will ever afford us a melancholy pleasure to have beheld our noble friend in the retreat he had prepared for his old age, and

to have obtained a glimpse, though fleeting and belated, of the domestic and exemplary conduct of his household, of which Sir John D'Oyly and others had told us so much. In walking in the grounds, driving in the gig to the farm, and in a one-horse chaise to church on Sunday, Mr Hastings continued to derive that enjoyment and benefit from the open air which he had always experienced; but again and again, in describing some agricultural experiment, or perhaps an excursion that could only be undertaken on horseback, he would send a pang to our hearts by remarking, "I have been forced to give this up," or "That's beyond me now." In the house the change was less marked, and we enjoyed the privilege of examining under his guidance his unequalled library, and the many curious and valuable objects contained in the other apartments. Among the pictures were several of Indian scenes from the brush of my old acquaintance Mr Hodges, one of which Mr Hastings pointed out to me with uncontrollable agitation—a representation of our feelcherra caught by the squall off the great rocks of Cohlgong. "I can never behold that painting without emotion," he said, "but I would not be without it for all that I possess." Those agreeable breakfast-parties, so often described to us, at which Mr Hastings, who always broke his fast alone, was the life of the company, contributing daily some poetical effusion, or reading aloud from an established author, or even from the newspaper, were now no more, but our venerable friend never failed to enhance the pleasure of the other meals of the day by his presence and discourse. In a word, he was as little the Governor-General as he had ever been in his easy moments of social intercourse, and Mrs Hastings was as much the Governor-General's lady. My admiration for my early patroness has diminished with the lapse of years no more than did her husband's, and he appeared to the last to find in her sight and conversation an adequate recompense for all his sufferings.

The morning on which we quitted Daylesford will remain for ever in my memory. We had bid farewell to Mrs Hastings in her dressing-room, but Mr Hastings, after attending us to the post-chaise, had suddenly requested of Maxwell to bid the post-boy drive on as far as the park gate, whither he would walk with

us. On our both entreating him to spare himself this fatigue, and we would attend him as long as he desired, he laughed.

"Why, ma'am, I an't Governor-General now. Were the Colonel and I to walk through Newark together, he would receive the respectful attention of the crowd, not I. I am but 'the old gentleman up at Daylesford,' whereas he would be believed to have lost his arm at Waterloo. I must be thankful they don't accuse me of dealing with the devil, like my Lord Clive. But pray, ma'am, let me offer you an arm, after the new fashion, though I lay myself open to the retort that you could better support me. They say our Indian ladies are languid and lazy, but you, like Mrs Hastings, offer a standing proof that a rational and fairly active mode of life, with exercise in moderation, will preserve health there as well as here."

"Indeed, dear sir," I said, "I could believe Mrs Hastings no older now than when I saw her last, if one could credit her to have forsworn her ancient distaste, and adopted powder."

"Ah, Colonel," says Mr Hastings, "your lady knows that she has only to frame a compliment to Mrs Hastings to please me. But indeed, it's of her I wished to speak—to ask a favour of you."

"Dear sir," said Maxwell, "you are our *yar wooffadar*—our profitable friend. A request from you is a favour to us."

"Then here it is. Should you hear of my death, I would ask you, if you are within a reasonable distance, to give Mrs Hastings the support of your presence at the funeral ceremony. The company of her old friends would afford her an extraordinary consolation."

"Why give way to these gloomy forebodings, dear sir?" I cried. "We all trust to assist in celebrating your hundredth birthday with the proper ceremony, as you promised the gentlemen at Bennaris."

"And so you shall, ma'am, if I reach it. My request will have no power to prevent its arriving. Nevertheless, I have had warnings— But with that I won't trouble you. May I feel easy in my mind?"

We both assured him of our full compliance with his wish, little guessing that in less than two months the threatened

summons would arrive. Even then Mr Hastings must have been suffering from the malady which was to carry him off, causing the most excruciating pain, and reducing him to the state of a skeleton. Of the angelic patience with which he endured this last sad trial we learned from Mrs Hastings' son, Sir Charles Imhoff, and his amiable lady, who received us when we arrived at Daylesford, after posting double stages from Wales. Lady Imhoff, who was present during his last moments, described to us with uncontrollable emotion the final instance of his delicate consideration for the feelings of others. Desiring to spare his attendants the sight of the last sad struggles of expiring nature, he drew a cambric handkerchief over his countenance, and appearing to sleep, thus passed away. No other exit could so fittingly have revealed the man.

That my presence afforded that comfort to Mrs Hastings which our deceased friend had anticipated, I can't feel sure. The affliction, so awful and overwhelming, which had overtaken her, appeared to contain no possibility of alleviation. But when I was bidding her farewell, she seized my hands in hers, and cried with something of her old vivacity,

"Hessy, I thank Heaven for this, that he was taken first. I can say this to you, though even my Charles or his Charlotte might not understand. What would his misery have been, deprived of me? Whereas, though I am left disconsolate, I have the precious charge of his memory to guard, and his virtues to perpetuate."

Alas! could it have been supposed that this task would be left to female devotion? Was there no place for Mr Hastings in Westminster Abbey, which received the bones of Lord Minto? Were the Directors less concerned to commemorate his name than that of Sir Eyre Coote? It may be that their natural shame over disregarding the latest request painfully dictated by their deceased servant—that the provision granted to him might be continued to his widow—has rendered any mention of him distasteful, but it appears certain that any memento of Mr Hastings that may enter the Abbey must be placed there by family, rather than public, piety. Is this the gratitude of a great nation to its greatest men?

My dear Colonel rebukes me for this petulance, saying that the monument of Mr Hastings is British India, and I agree with him. The labours of the economist were rendered fruitless by costly wars, not of his making, the peaceful progress of our own territories hindered by the convulsions of nature. But the stability of the British dominion, and all that is good in its operation, is invariably attributed to-day by the Indians to Mr Hastings, and his successors in office bear continual, if sometimes reluctant, testimony to the wisdom and liberality of his measures. And therefore, notwithstanding all he endured of contradiction and reproach both in India and in England, I cry, like the Seapoys, and with all the fervour of a grateful heart, *Mester Hushteen Saub Behauder kee Jye*—Honour to the victorious Mr Hastings!

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

THE CAREER OF WARREN HASTINGS.

THE author has deliberately thrown this book into the form of fiction, in the hope of making Warren Hastings something more than the sinister shadow of a mighty name to some of those who have hitherto been content to accept the libels of Macaulay as genuine history. The attempt is here made to show Mr Hastings as he revealed himself to his intimates. How closely the lines of this self-revelation have been followed will be recognised by those who are acquainted with the letters to his wife, of which the author is preparing an annotated edition from the originals in the British Museum.

A brief account of the earlier part of Hastings' life may be useful for reference. He was born at Churchill in Oxfordshire on Dec. 6th, 1732, losing his mother when he was only a few days old. Deserted by their father, he and his sister Ann, (who afterwards married Mr John Woodman, Hastings' trustee and constant correspondent,) were brought up by their grandfather, a member of an old and famous family, but reduced by poverty to accepting the curacy of Churchill. The boy attended the village school, but was afterwards sent by a successful uncle to a preparatory school at Newington, and thence to Westminster. On his uncle's death he was removed by his guardian, who had determined, in spite of the protests and generous offers of the head-master, to send him to India. He landed in Bengal in October, 1750, worked as a clerk at Calcutta, studying Persian and Hindustani in his leisure hours, and in 1753 was transferred to the factory at Kasimbazar, where he became a member of the local council. With his chief, Mr Watts, he fell into the hands of Suraj-ud-Daula on the capture of Kasimbazar, which preceded by a few days that of Calcutta, in 1756, but was released through the friendliness of the head of the

neighbouring Dutch factory, and did what he could to procure information and assistance for the hapless refugees at Fulta. Suspected of plotting against Suraj-ud-Daula, he escaped to Fulta, and was ready when the relieving force under Clive and Admiral Watson arrived in December, to serve with it as a volunteer. About this time he married Mary, the widow of Captain Buchanan, one of the victims of the Black Hole. (It has always been believed hitherto that Mary Hastings' first husband was the Captain Campbell who was killed at Bajbaj in the advance up the river, but see the 'Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal' for July 21st, 1899, and "A Friend of Warren Hastings" in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for April, 1904.) When peace was restored, Hastings first became assistant, and then Resident, at the court of Mir Jafar at Murshidabad. Here first his infant daughter, and then his wife, died in 1759, his son, who was sent home for education, surviving them only a few years. Placed in a position of great difficulty as intermediary between the Nawab and the Calcutta Council, he reaped the usual reward of the impartial in the dissatisfaction of both parties, and when he was raised to a seat in the Council in 1761, his insistence on the rights of the Nawab as against his colleagues gained him the utmost unpopularity. Under the weak, if well-intentioned rule of Vansittart, Mir Kasim, Mir Jafar's successor, was goaded to rebellion, and the war which broke out was only ended by the victory of Buxar in 1764. As soon as the triumph of the British arms was certain, Hastings resigned his post and returned home, a comparatively poor man, since he, alone of the Council, had consistently refused the bribes of the successive would-be Nawabs. In England he provided so lavishly for his needy relations that, when his Indian investments turned out badly, he was obliged to apply to the Company for further employment. They gave him the post of second in Council at Madras, and it was on his voyage thither in 1769 that he made the acquaintance of Baroness Imhoff, (see Appendix II.,) who was to have so great an influence over his future life. In 1772 he was transferred to Bengal as Governor, and found abundant employment in the settlement of the land revenue and the establishment of local courts of justice under the district officers. Managing an unwieldy and often disaffected Council with great tact and ability, he succeeded in suppressing monopolies injurious to the Company's interests, and in discouraging, though he was not allowed to root out, dacoity. In addition to these labours, he was kept constantly on the alert by the intrigues of the native rulers on the borders of British territory. On the war with the Rohillas, so grievously misrepresented by Burke and Macaulay, Sir John Strachey has written fully in 'Hastings and the Rohilla War.' In 1774 came the great upheaval caused by Lord North's Regulating Act of the previous year. Hastings became Governor-General of India, but he was still to be assisted by a Council on

which he might be outvoted, and three of the four Councillors were new men sent out from home. Of the Supreme Court, appointed at the same time, his old schoolfellow, Elijah Impey, was made Chief-Justice. The dissensions caused by the new Councillors' prejudice against Hastings, and wide interpretation of their own duties, lasted, with varying fortunes, until Francis left India in 1780. For the Nandkumar episode, which is barely touched upon in the text, Sir James Stephen's "Nuncomar and Impey" should be read. In 1777 Hastings married the Baroness Imhoff, and the period from this event to his own return to England in 1785 is that covered by the story. Enough is also told of the Trial and the events preceding it to explain the sequence of events; but to those who wish to see the effect produced on a sympathetic spectator may be recommended the account in the 'Diary of Madame d'Arblay.' The extraordinary meanness of the Government in not only refusing to pay Hastings' costs after his acquittal, but forbidding the Company to do so, was reflected later in the behaviour of the Company itself, which disregarded callously the request of its dying servant that his pension might be continued to his widow. He died at Daylesford on Aug. 22nd, 1818, and was buried in the churchyard there. With a more than Carthaginian ingratitude, his country has never erected a monument to his memory, nor even paid him the empty honour of naming after him a warship or a London street.

APPENDIX II.

MRS HASTINGS, HER HISTORY.

Slight as is our knowledge of the early life of this remarkable woman, the small amount of information we possess has tended to be further obscured by the efforts of her husband's assailants to strike at him through her. She was born on February 2nd, 1747, but her birthplace is unknown. Macaulay has given currency to a statement found in a footnote to the *Sir-ul-Mutaqharin*, that she was a native of Archangel, but there is no evidence extant to support this. It has been suggested that the use of the term "passports," when Mrs Hastings' mother visited Daylesford in 1803, and Hastings' allusion to the fact that she was able to converse with no one but her daughter, confirm the story; but the word passport was always used in the plural, (as now in the case of an ambassador's receiving his passports,) and German was at least as unknown to the ordinary Englishman as Russian is now. That German was Mme. Chapusetin's language is shown by her daughter's sending her a German message by Sir Charles Imhoff when he was about to

visit her, but in their early intercourse with their English friends Baron and Baroness Imhoff seem to have used French, (he is called Mr Charles D'Imhoff in a letter to Mr Woodman,) which Hastings spoke readily. Sir N. Wraxall says that Mrs Hastings was a native of His Britannic Majesty's Electoral Dominions, while in the German life of Amalie von Helwig, (*née* Imhoff,) Henriette von Bissing states that she belonged to a French emigrant family settled in Stuttgart. The house of Chapuset or Chapusset was probably one of those which quitted France after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the form Chapusetin or Chapusettin, which has puzzled some students, possessing the German feminine affix used in the case of the female members of a family. Baron von Chapuset, Mrs Hastings' father, married a lady named St Valentin, probably of French descent like himself, and the Baroness, then a widow, was still living at Stuttgart in 1797 and for some years afterwards, as is shown by a memorandum of her address in a letter to Richard Johnson, who seems to have been her daughter's legal adviser, and a number of references in the letters to Sir Charles Imhoff.

The date of the marriage with Baron Imhoff is unknown, but it cannot have been later than 1765, and may have been earlier. Through the kindness of the wife of the British chaplain, the Stuttgart registers have been searched for any entries relating to the pair and their children, but without result, which suggests that the wedding may have taken place at some country estate. The movements of the Imhoffs after their marriage are a blank until 1768, when "Mr Imoff" showed a miniature at the exhibition of the London Society of Artists. Sir C. Lawson, in his 'Private Life of Warren Hastings,' says they were living in Nürnberg. From Madame d'Arblay's 'Diary' there can be no doubt that Baroness Imhoff and "Mrs Schwellenberg," the Keeper of the Robes, were old friends, and it was probably through the latter's influence with the Queen that permission was obtained for the Imhoffs to go to India. Of their sojourn in England nothing is known, except that a portrait of "Mrs Imhoff and Child" was painted by R. E. Pine, so that it appears they were not in what may be called the Reynolds set. This would account for their never having met Hastings until they were on board the *Duke of Grafton*. The description of the first interview between Hastings and the Baroness, given in the text, is taken from Wraxall's 'Reminiscences,' and the story sets forth the events that followed. The substantial accuracy of the narration will only be disputed by those assailants, more virulent even than Macaulay and the followers of Francis, who must outrage all probability, and discredit all testimony, for the sake of proving Hastings unworthy of confidence in his private, if not in his public life. Of such are those who tear from its context a passage in a letter written in 1784 and referring to his illness of two years before, to read into it an admission of guilt in 1769, and those who point to a dis-

respectful reference to Mrs Imhoff in a letter of his false friend Macpherson's as showing that her position was an equivocal one. They have not observed that it is evident from a later letter that Hastings called Macpherson sharply to account for the phrase, or that, later still, the unabashed Macpherson, pretending not to understand the rebuke, speaks of Mrs Hastings in exactly the same terms when Hastings and she had been married for two years.

But these attempts to defame a dead woman pale before the statements of Frau von Bissing in the work already mentioned. Amalie von Helwig was the eldest daughter of Imhoff by his second marriage, (not his first, as Sir C. Lawson says,) and her biographer, by means of a little rearrangement of dates and facts, transforms him into an injured innocent of the most pronounced type. It is significant that Hastings' friend Hancock, who had no kindly feelings for Baroness Imhoff, dismisses her husband curtly as "truly a German"—a description which admitted of no more complimentary interpretation in those days than these. But to Frau von Bissing Imhoff is handsome, talented and elegant. His portrait-painting is not mentioned, but he is alleged to have entered the Company's army in 1773 as captain, and to have returned home on furlough, apparently at once, leaving his wife under the protection of his friend Hastings, for whom she conceived a regrettable attachment. This she confessed in her letters to her husband, whereupon he divorced her, and married Fräulein Louise von Schardt in 1775. This would be quick work even nowadays, and a little thought must surely have convinced Imhoff's apologist of its absolute impossibility in the days of ten- or twelve-month voyages to India. The Imhoffs really went to India in 1769, and Frau von Bissing's only trustworthy date is that of Imhoff's second marriage, 1775. His quixotic absence of suspicion is a myth, and the many letters from his wife, which Amalie's biographer says she has seen in the possession of the Imhoff family, acknowledging unrestrainedly her feeling for Hastings, would have been hypocritical indeed had they pretended ignorance of the very businesslike arrangement of which the Baron had charge. It must be remembered that by German law, as Fanny Burney pointed out to the King's equerries when they were casting doubts upon Mrs Hastings' character, divorce for the cause suggested by Frau von Bissing *is* an absolute bar to remarriage, while incompatibility of temper is regarded as a fully sufficient reason. The inadequacy of the cause, according to English opinion, enabled Hastings' enemies to assert periodically that the divorce was inoperative, as the phrases "The German husband of your Warren's wife," (in the *Rolliad*,) and "a pretended divorce," show. The assertion that Imhoff sold his consent to the divorce for £10,000 is due to the *Sair-ul-Mutaqharin*; but it is rendered at least probable by Frau von Bissing's statement that on his return to Germany he bought back

—with the remains, she says, of his small possessions—the family estate. There was a delay, which has never been explained, in solemnising Hastings' marriage. The divorce must have been operative in 1775, when Imhoff married Fräulein von Schardt, and, allowing a year for the news to reach Calcutta, the other marriage might have been expected in 1776. But we are expressly told that the authorisation of the marriage did not arrive until 1777, when it was brought out by the *Rippon*, which carried also the news that emboldened Francis and Clavering to their *coup d'état*, and the marriage took place on Aug. 8th, the bride being described in the register as "Miss Anne Maria Appolonia Chapusettin," (Busteed.) Sir Charles made the acquaintance of "Amalie and the rest of her kindred" when he visited Germany with his wife in 1802, "at the wish of his dying father," says Mrs Hastings in one of her letters to him.

The most curiously conflicting statements are to be found respecting the children of Baron Imhoff and Mrs Hastings. Sir C. Lawson says that there were three—Ernest, who died in infancy, Charles, and Amalie. The last is obviously a mistake, and I can find no trace of Ernest, but he may have died before the move to England. Frau von Bissing says that two sons were born at Madras, one of whom died there. Through the kindness of Mr Foster, of the India Office, who has examined the Madras registers, I am able to state positively that this is incorrect, as the name of Imhoff does not appear in the list either of births or deaths. The list of passengers on board the *Duke of Grafton* shows that the Imhoffs took one child with them to India, but the notes to the Probationary Ode attributed to Archbishop Markham in the *Rolliad* made it evident that Mrs Hastings had two sons living in 1785. On examining the Hastings Correspondence, frequent reference to "the Master Imhoffs," "Mr Imhoff's little boys," and "our sister's sons," appeared in Mr Woodman's letters. The boys were first in the charge of a Mrs Touchet, then at school at Chiswick, and finally were sent to Westminster. Which of them it was that accompanied his parents to India, and was sent home alone—curiously enough, since his father followed three months later—in December, 1772, as is shown by a letter from Hancock introducing him to his wife, it seems impossible to ascertain, though it would appear probable that it was the younger of the two, since the elder would be more fitted to be left in England. The Bursar of Westminster School, who has most kindly given me particulars of the career of both, was unable to state which was the elder, since both were admitted at the same time, but the matter is cleared up by a passage in a letter of Major Scott's to Mrs Hastings in 1783:—"I mentioned your young gentlemen. They are both extremely well. The eldest grows a very graceful handsome young fellow, and the youngest, little Julius, is, I assure you, a perfect

resemblance of his dear Mother." Julius entered the Company's service as a writer in 1790, while his better known brother Charles became a soldier some years earlier, serving at first in one of the Prince of Waldeck's regiments. Julius died in India in 1799, after holding various positions of considerable importance. Several letters from him to his stepfather, breathing the utmost respect and affection towards both him and his mother, and his will, which bears no date, are among the Hastings papers in the British Museum. A son of his was brought to England for education, and Mr and Mrs Hastings interested themselves in settling him in life "in the indego line," as he puts it. Charles received a commission in the British army in the same year, married a daughter of Sir Charles Blunt, was allowed, with three other Englishmen, to accept the insignia and title of a Knight Grand Commander of the foreign order of St Joachim, and was a constant visitor to Daylesford with his wife, inheriting the estate on his mother's death.

As the Governor General's wife, Mrs Hastings made herself universally respected. Francis, with the best will in the world to find fault, can only sneer at the alternate friendship and rivalry between her and Lady Impey, at the unfortunate result of her attempts at economy, and at her match-making propensities. Her conduct at Patna is vouched for again and again in her husband's letters, including that dictated when he was at the point of death; but the full description, written at his request by Captain Sands for transmission to England, has unfortunately been lost to sight, and no inquiries have succeeded in tracing it. The account of her devotion during his illness in 1782 is taken entirely from his own letters to her and to Mr and Mrs Woodman.

Mrs Hastings erected the bust and tablet which preserve her husband's memory in Westminster Abbey, and survived him more than eighteen years, dying at Daylesford on March 20th, 1837, at the age of ninety.

APPENDIX III.

THE BENARES EXPEDITION AND ITS ACCOMPANYING CIRCUMSTANCES.

So much confusion and misconception has been imported into the affair of Chait Singh by Burke and his faithful follower Macaulay, that it seems desirable clearly to state the principles involved. The zamindari of Benares was transferred from the Nawab-Vizier of Oude to the Company in 1775, the duties and rights of the zamindar remaining

the same, but under an altered suzerain. Among these duties has always been the obligation to furnish aids, (to adopt the feudal term,) in money and troops when the suzerain power was engaged in military operations and demanded them. It suited Burke and Francis to represent Chait Singh as an independent sovereign, which is exactly what he would have liked to be, but was not. The zamindars who had come under the Company's rule preserved the ambitions which under the feeble sway of the later Mughal emperors had so often been successful, and especially that of shaking off the yoke of the suzerain and making themselves independent. To Chait Singh his own position appeared peculiarly favourable for such self-assertion. On the one hand he had the example of the Oude Begums, ruling as practically independent princes the territory they held nominally from Asaf-ud-Daula, on the other the fact that his fief lay further from Calcutta than any of the others which were controlled by the Bengal Council. He had one obvious disadvantage, of which he made too little account, the fact that he was not a member of any ancient ruling family, but merely an upstart of low caste. In his view an initial success would go far towards nullifying this disability, and he was right. The hereditary rulers of the neighbouring fiefs were ready to follow the lead of the upstart when they were assured that he had successfully defied the suzerain power, but their prudence in waiting until then, together with the prompt measures taken by Hastings, made their sympathy come too late. Had they concerted the revolt with him beforehand, or had Hastings allowed them time to concentrate their forces after it, instead of attacking them at once in detail, it is difficult to see what could have saved the British power in Bengal from being once more restricted within the range of the guns of Fort William. The peculiarity of the position made the danger of the situation. Chait Singh's was a test case, and Hastings, with his unerring eye for essentials, saw this long before matters came to a head. If the upstart ruler of Benares could defy Calcutta with impunity, what might not be accomplished by chiefs of long descent? Even in his choice of a grievance Chait Singh betrayed his ineptitude. It was a vital matter to Hastings to bring the Mahratta War to a close before Haidar moved, and since the resources of the Presidency were already severely tasked, the necessary help in men and money must be obtained from the feudatories. Chait Singh hesitated, temporised, wavered, in the hope that Hastings would be superseded in favour of a more pliable successor, and thus came into collision with him on a point upon which he could not give way. The assertion that Hastings pursued him with peculiar rancour because of his overtures to Clavering and Francis falls flat in view of the fact that all the other feudatories had offended in the same way. With the national instinct for worshipping the rising sun, they hastened to make themselves safe, as they believed, with the coming power, but none of

them allowed their disloyal aspirations to carry them so far or rule them so long.

The necessity of the conflict thus established, it remains to consider the time at which it was precipitated. The state of India after Haidar's successful invasion demanded emphatically that a blow should be struck somewhere, the state of the Bengal treasury demanded the raising of money, and Chait Singh's own unwisdom singled him out as the destined objective. An offer of troops, the payment of his arrears, would have saved him, but confiding in his distance from the capital and the preoccupation of the Government, he persisted in his refusal, not guessing that matters were just now in such train that Hastings could safely leave Calcutta. Of the wisdom of Hastings' journey it is difficult to judge on account of its upshot. Had all fallen out as he expected, it would have been lauded as one of the boldest and most brilliant strokes in history, and it is well to notice that he had gauged Chait Singh's character correctly. The Rajah whined and submitted as had been expected, but what Hastings had not taken into account was the lowering of British prestige in consequence of the Carnatic disasters and Goddard's retreat from Poonah. The *Ikbal* of the Company was no longer invincible, so reasoned Chait Singh's troops, and they made the spasmodic attempt at a rising which might have had such tremendous consequences had they possessed a leader with an ounce of determination, but which flickered out so poorly in face of the contemptuous courage with which Hastings met it.

There are three matters arising out of the Benares Expedition on which a few words are necessary, the Bijaigarh Treasure, the Lucknow Affidavits, and Asaf-ud-Daula's gift of ten lakhs. The contradictory accusations showered upon Hastings over the fall of Bijaigarh furnish their own refutation. That in the imperative need for money which existed he should ever have been accused of wishing to lavish the treasure on the army shows the malignity with which he was assailed, and which turned swiftly to accuse him of trying to deprive the army of its lawful spoil. His correspondence with Major Popham holds, as I believe, the key of the difficulty in the use of the word "effects," which would naturally apply to the jewels and money which the women would carry on their persons, but could in no way describe the treasure which Chait Singh had stored in the fort. The "effects" were the natural spoil of the soldiers, and to these Hastings refers in the note so often quoted and misquoted, in which, answering Popham's letter reporting the Rani's offer to surrender the place if she and her household were allowed to depart unsearched, he says "I should be very sorry that your officers and soldiers lost any part of the reward to which they are so well entitled." It is possible that in all honesty Popham took the "effects" so often mentioned in the correspondence to include the treasure, while Hastings had no such intention, but

the haste in which the distribution was made leads one to fear that the wish for some justification was father to the thought of putting forward the Governor-General's letter.

Of the origin of the Lucknow Affidavits an account is given in the text, but it may be remarked that the reason for the extreme virulence with which they were assailed was their important and unassailable character. No doubt can be entertained, on reading them, of the Begums' active participation in Chait Singh's rising when it seemed successful, and the only resource for the Begums' champions was to abuse the defendant's attorney, in this case the Chief Justice. If the affidavits had not been taken, the charge against Hastings of wantonly oppressing and robbing two defenceless old women of high birth might have been put forward without fear of contradiction, since the witnesses were all far away, but since the affidavits prevented this, it was necessary to throw mud at all concerned in making them. The standpoint of the accusers is well shown by their refusal to call Major Gordon, one of the officers concerned, though he appeared at the Trial in readiness to support his affidavit.

Into the matter of the Nawab-Vizier's gift, much unnecessary mystery has been imported. Hastings' position in the matter is perfectly clear. He accepted the ten lakhs for the necessities of the state, and paid them into the treasury as they were realised, but in the hope that he might afterwards receive permission to reclaim them as his personal property. Gleig says weakly that he supposes Mr Hastings must have held some views peculiar to himself on the subject, with which he is not acquainted, but in the letters written both at the time and afterwards, Hastings, fresh from the victories over Chait Singh, shows that he regarded himself as the saviour of India. He had checked at its inception a rising before which the Carnatic disasters would have paled, had increased the Company's revenue by the new settlement of the zamindari of Benares, and brought order into the city itself, the state of which had reflected disgrace on our rule throughout Hindustan, while Mrs Hastings had prevented the evacuation of Patna and thus saved Bahar. In view of his own poverty and the practice of the Directors in former cases, he might well expect his request to be granted, and there can be little doubt that in normal circumstances this would have been done. But the hostile Ministry, which had seized eagerly at the first garbled report of the Benares proceedings to allow Burke and Dundas to censure Hastings without waiting for his own account of what had happened, was as little inclined to generosity as to justice, and the request was refused in singularly offensive terms.

APPENDIX IV.

HISTORICAL AUTHORITIES, CHIEFLY CONTEMPORARY.

Material for the study of the career of Warren Hastings is extant in bewildering amount and variety. Himself a voluminous writer, he seems to have preserved almost all the letters he ever received, as the fifty huge volumes of his Miscellaneous Correspondence in the British Museum testify. The custom of sending all letters of any importance in duplicate or triplicate by different ships has been effectual in guarding his own against accident, and the precious little collection of letters to his wife sheds a light, unattainable to his earlier biographers, on his personal character. Of the proceedings of his government we have the fullest possible account in the three volumes of the "Selections from the Letters, Despatches and other State Papers preserved in the Foreign Department," edited by Mr G. W. Forrest, C.I.E., in 1890, which give the varying fortunes day by day of the long "war of minutes," and the incidents which interrupted or affected it. In the following notes, which are intended for the information of historical students interested in the man and his age, a number of other authorities are mentioned.

The account of the attempted *coup d'état* of Clavering and Francis in chapter ii. follows Grand's Narrative, which, though not to be relied on for dates, preserves many graphic touches of scenes of which the author was an eye-witness. Francis's diary and letters, (reproduced in considerable detail in Parkes and Merivale's 'Memoirs,' and more briefly in "The Francis Papers,") give a continuous account of events prior to his leaving India in 1780, but need to be checked by Hastings' letters, as given in Gleig's 'Life,' and the State Papers. The story of the warning conveyed to Chevalier, given by Macintosh, was undoubtedly inspired by him. For the campaigns of Leslie and Goddard, Pennant's "View of Hindostan" gives a good deal of out-of-the-way information, while "Memoirs of the Late War in Asia," by An Officer, contains a most vivid account of the Maratta War. Macintosh's 'Travels,' and Captain Price's criticism of them, "Observations upon a late Publication," provide between them a good deal of information and entertainment, and with 1780 comes the first Indian newspaper, Hickey's 'Bengal Gazette,' of the short and troublous career of which Dr Busteed has given a full account in his "Echoes from old Calcutta." Of the events which led up to the duel, the fullest possible account is available in Hastings' letters home and the Proceedings of Council, with side-lights from the letters to his wife and the Miscellaneous Correspondence, and the same may be said of the outbreak of the

Carnatic War. A second newspaper, 'The India Gazette,' is available by the end of 1780, while for the Benares Expedition and its consequences we have, besides the State Papers and Hodges' account of his travels, Hastings' own "Narrative of the Insurrection at Banaris," (containing as an appendix the Lucknow Affidavits,) and the second series of letters to his wife. For the war in the Carnatic, "Memoirs of the War in Asia," Wilks's "Historical Sketches of the South of India," Forbes's "Oriental Memoirs," and Sir Eyre Coote's despatches in the State Papers, provide abundant information. For the state of parties at home, and the intrigues of which Hastings was the victim, the long letters of the indefatigable Major Scott may be consulted, while Colonel Pearse is hardly less voluminous in his accounts of his experiences in the Carnatic. The sufferings of the Seringapatam prisoners are recounted in Jerrold's "Life of Baird" as well as in the "War in Asia," while the final review at Gyretti is commemorated in a brief paragraph hidden away on an obscure page of the 'East Indian United Service Magazine' for 1833. For the last chapter the authorities have been the printed accounts of the Trial and the debates in the House of Lords, Mme. d'Arblay's 'Diary,' and the short memoir of Hastings contained in 'The Gentleman's Magazine' for 1818.

Valuable fragments of information are also found in the "Memoirs of Sir Elijah Impey" by his son, Scott's published works, Lord Valentia's 'Travels,' the translation of the *Seïr-ul-Mutaqharin*, (giving the native view,) and many other forgotten volumes of memoirs and travels. It only remains to express sincere gratitude to the officials in the Manuscript Room at the British Museum, to the Bursar of Westminster School, and to Mr Forrest and Mr Foster, of the India Office, for the most kind assistance they have given in the complicated researches involved.

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